NME
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TAME IMPALA
A trip into the mind of a psych-pop shaman

FOALS
Ultimate guide to the new album

NEW ORDER
On working with La Roux and Iggy

"I want to be talked about in the same way as Dylan, The Beatles, Hendrix..."

Kendrick Lamar
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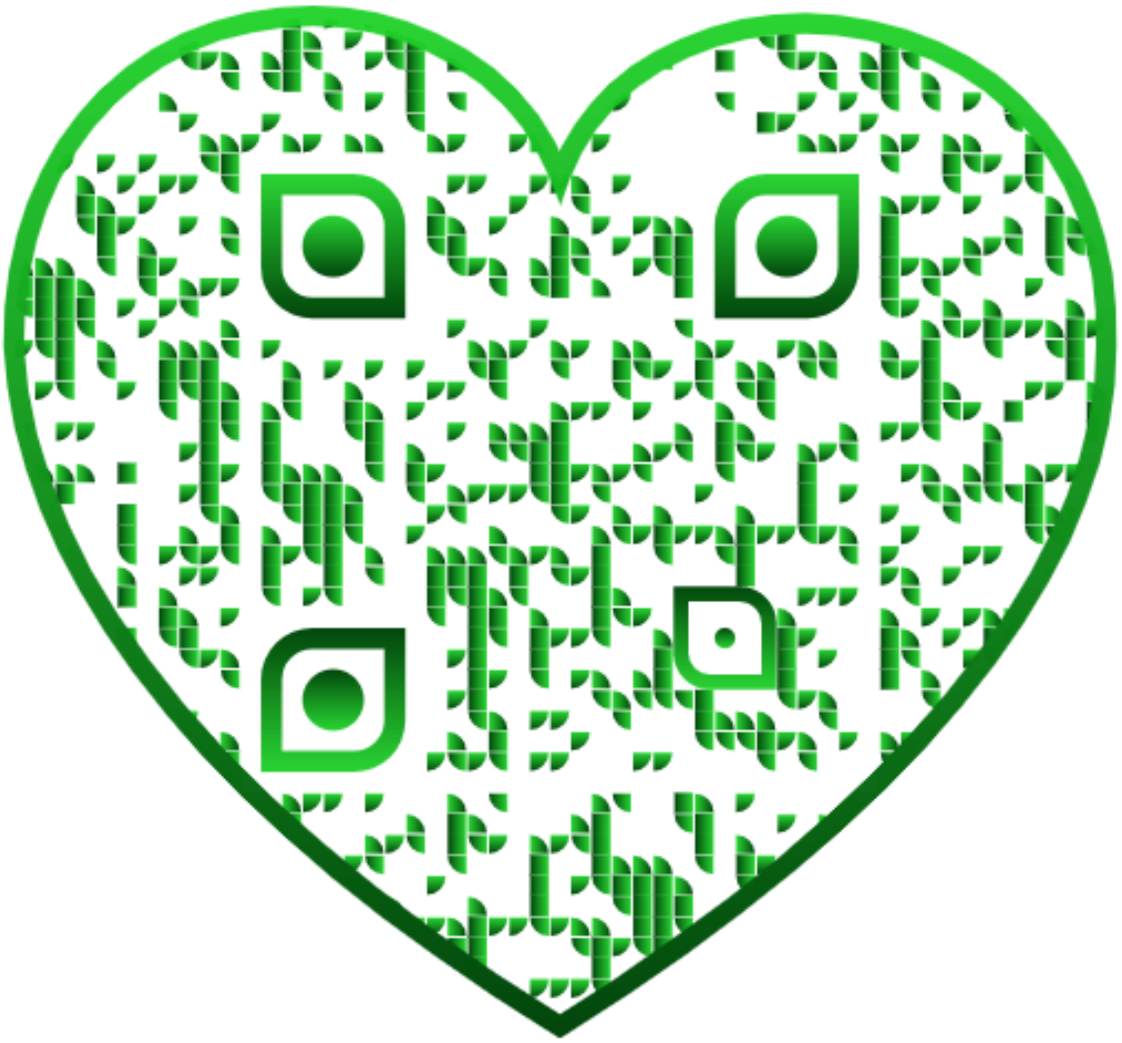

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COVER: SHAMIL TANNA

SOUNDING OFF

TELL US WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND

Answering you this week: Greg Cochrane

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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THE WOLF GANG ATTACKS

About 10 days ago I went to see Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds at Calling Festival in London. Wolf Alice played at the festival and while on the tube I was sitting across from what could, at most, have been a 12-year-old girl, who was telling her aunt that she couldn't wait to see Wolf Alice on the bill, that they were so exciting at Glastonbury and that they crowdsurfed! For a while I gained a genuine bit of hope for new bands, like they are actually doing something at a point when the mainstream music is on its knees, that one day soon there can be fantastic new bands at the top of the charts again, because if they're inspiring children like that then surely they will be unstoppable.
Alfie Green, via email

Greg Cochrane: Yes Alfie! This is exactly the kind of correspondence we love to kick off with – gets the blood pumping and the head dizzy. We hope Wolf Alice are just one of the new bands inspiring such a reaction. They were only recently kept off the top of the albums chart because of Florence's Glastonbury headline sales boost. I'm glad you've got the faith back. Now, use these gig vouchers to go and see a ton of new music. Here are some suggestions: Weaves, Formation and Spring King.

OASIS OVERLOAD?

I went to see Noel Gallagher at Clapham Common recently and was very disappointed. The sound was very quiet for Noel's set. Why? 19 songs played and so few from the (excellent) new album. Seems like everyone only went to hear the old Oasis songs. People need to move on – including Noel. It's not 1995 any more. Also, why do people pay 60 quid to watch someone and then talk throughout the main act? Not only do they not hear the songs they also ruin it for anyone else.
Bill Bates, via email

GC: Bill, you are a rare animal. I was there too, and while I agree on the sound niggles, you must be one of about four people in that crowd bemoaning the fact he played too many (six) Oasis songs. I still haven't got my voice back.

DAMON DASHED

Now, I love Damon Albarn and his music as much as the next everyday robot, but I can't say I'm surprised he was dragged offstage by security after five hours of an Africa Express gig in Denmark. Face it, even the best sex of your life would start to get boring three hours in, and by the time you've got to five hours you'd want some burly bouncer to give them a timely tap on the shoulder, pointing at his watch.
Emily Slade, via email

GC: It's true that some of the past Africa Express shows have probably been testing affairs but this one looked like an absolute hoot. Damon's toothy grin as he was picked up by security was priceless. Curfew schmurfew.

CHARTS VERSUS PUB

I'm all for the record industry tackling piracy and flogging more music by synchronising their global release dates to a Friday, but a little part of my teenage self died on the day of the last Sunday chart. There's so little youth-friendly entertainment available on mainstream TV and radio on Sunday that the charts were always a welcome distraction. On a Friday I'll be too busy working all day and drinking myself invertebrate all night to care about which records have sold the most that week. But most of all I pity the future generations who will actually have to do their frigging homework.
Pete Lewis, via email

GC: We live in a new world, Pete. A world of Hype Machine and Apple Music's daily chart. So I'm not sure whether a weekly chart – albeit made up of streams and sales – will be relevant that much longer anyway.

SHUT UP ABOUT THE LIBERTINES

You've hero-worshipped them for years so I've always wanted to 'get' The Libertines. And I've tried. I was at Glastonbury, so I hung around when word got around about their 'surprise' set. Having just read your post-Glasto issue I'm wondering whether you actually saw it. Triumphant? Spectacular? It was neither. Vastly overrated.
Paul Johnson, via email

GC: Paul, at least lend an ear to new album 'Anthems For Doomed Youth', out on September 4 – it might just blow your mind!

YEARS & TEARS

I'm writing to express my outrage regarding your review of Years & Years. I understand that different people like different music, but I feel as if you've personally attacked Olly Alexander in this review, including extremely rude and insulting comments on his CV. You clearly have a lot of hatred for the band, as seen in previous reviews. Years & Years are a fantastic band who a wide range of people can relate to, who are blowing up at a blink. Your loss if you don't get it.
Gemma Imbriano, via email

GC: You refer to our 4/10 review of Years & Years' debut album, 'Communion', I presume? Well know this: we do not hate the band, and if we focus on Olly that's because he's the frontman, intended to be the centre of attention. The writer, Jordan Bassett, simply failed to see what all the fuss is about. Not everyone's opinion in the *NME* office, by any means...

LOOK WHO'S STALKING

Finally got to meet Matt Bellamy, who was just as lovely in real life as I ever could have hoped. Also bagged a compliment - he said I have "lovely hair and lovely eyes"! Lifetime made? I think so! (I'm on the left).
Melissa James, via email

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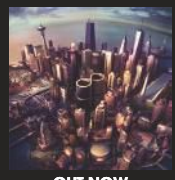
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ON REPEAT

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NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Blur
Y'All Doomed

Blur have never been strangers to the idea of putting out a curio here and there (see 'Parklife"s 'Lot 105' for proof), and 'Y'All Doomed' certainly fits into that category. An instrumental knockabout with thrashy guitars, dubby bass and manic synth parts, the track comes free with pots of Magic Whip, the ice cream now available in Co-Op supermarkets. Not as good as a chocolate flake, but nearly.
Dan Stubbs, News Editor

2. Ought
Beautiful Blue Sky

This first single from the Montreal band's upcoming second album finds them in confident form. Their sprawling Pavement-meets-Television post-punk sound acts as a scalpel with which singer Tim Beeler opens up his idiosyncratic mind. Here, he repeats inane small talk ("*Fancy seeing you here/How's the husband?*") before stating that his embrace of death is "*all I have left*". It's smart, if morbid, stuff from one of Canada's most underrated bands.
David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Reporter

3. Royal Headache
Another World

Royal Headache have had a difficult few years, but you wouldn't know it from this new single. The Sydney four-piece split and promptly disappeared in 2013, refusing record company offers after 2011's self-titled debut became a cult hit. They reformed last year, and this frenetic blast of garage rock is a tantalising taster of upcoming album 'High' that crashes in at full pelt, raises an unimpressed eyebrow, then speeds off again before you know what's hit you.
Larry Bartleet, writer

4. Goat
It's Time For Fun

Swedish psychsters Goat continue to operate under a bejewelled cloak of anonymity, probably because they're all suburban parents with respectable day jobs. But you don't need to see their faces to sign up to the sentiment, "*Take off your clothes, put down your guns/No time for problems, it's time for fun*", they chant persuasively, over a searing, ritual groove that makes unlikely beach buddies of Suicide and Tinariwen.
Sam Richards, writer

5. Fidlar
West Coast

Clocking in at a three-and-a-half minutes – which is pretty hefty for Fidlar – the second track from the LA brat-punks' forthcoming second album 'Too' stands out from their usual 120-second rattlers before it even begins. The riffs on 'West Coast' are still unkempt, but there's structure beneath the chaos, with proper verses, choruses and all. Whether that's a good thing is arguable, but it's certainly progress.
Lisa Wright, writer

6. Julia Holter
Feel You

The first single from Holter's upcoming fourth album 'Have You In My Wilderness' is just as intoxicating as fans of 2013's 'Loud City Song' might expect. But as stately harpsichord blossoms woozily into a surge of lush strings and vocals, it's worth keep an ear out for the Los Angeles singer's bizarre observations. "*All these perfumes in this parking lot*", she moans, "*It's impossible to see who I'm waiting for*". Us neither.
Larry Bartleet, writer

7. Blood Orange
Do You See My Skin Through The Flames?

Dev Hynes has described this standalone single as a song that works through "some things on my mind". Part defiant speech and part confession, it sees Dev set out his feelings on racism, his origins and the recent Charleston massacre over cascading piano and simple beats. With lines like "*I have nothing left to give when you don't notice what's wrong*", this is thought provoking, to say the least.
Greg Cochrane, Editor, NME.COM

8. Girls Names
A Hunger Artist

Belfast's Girls Names ditched the last vestiges of C86 jangle to effect their gothic metamorphosis on 2013's 'The New Life', but this new track, from forthcoming follow-up 'Arms Around A Vision' – is even more menacing. The clue's in the Kafka; cheery visions of isolation and mortality meander through a backdrop of driving post-punk guitars, while gauzy synths maintain the '80s gloom. They'll be wearing giant insect costumes next.
April Clare Welsh, writer

9. Crystal Castles
Deicide

In April, Ethan Kath put out 'Frail', the first track from his Alice Glass-less version of Crystal Castles. The lyrics were sung by a mysterious woman called Edith, who sounded enough like Glass to start rumours that her departure was all just a magnificent ruse. There are no such complications with the haunting rave of 'Deicide', on which Edith sounds soft, distant and absolutely un-Glass-like over what is, undeniably, an absolute banger.
Tom Howard, Assistant Editor

10. Paul Smith
Break Me Down

This latest morsel from the second solo album from Maxïmo Park's hat-wearing frontman ('Contradictions', coming August 21) is typically tight as a nut, but the extra freedom gives Paul Smith a chance to exercise his romantic inclinations even more than usual. Remembering how his lover made King's Cross *"a bit more glamorous"*, Smith celebrates a relationship's special moments over a hurtling jangle that gets prettier as it goes along.
Matthew Horton, writer

LINDA BROWNLEE, STACEY MARK, PAMELA LITTKY, ALICE BAXLEY, EMMA VIOLA LILJA

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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11. Eminem
Kings Never Die (feat. Gwen Stefani)

Taken from the soundtrack to upcoming boxing blockbuster *Southpaw*, which the rapper executive produced, 'Kings Never Die' is suitably cinematic, with Shady spitting with shades of 'Lose Yourself' about being "*back to the underdog*" over stadium guitars. Slim's still the scrapper he was on that 2002 hit, even if the production he's snarling over here lacks the punch of his best tracks.
Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

12. Daphni
Vikram

After giving away 'Usha' in June, Dan Snaith – aka Caribou – is back with another track under his Daphni alias. 'Vikram' is a minimal, otherworldly number that's perfectly suited to Snaith's more dancefloor-focused outlet. Bass sequences and processed thumps combine on a percussive backing track as vocal samples and exotic string melodies drop in and out. Equal parts robot and raga, this is another brilliantly weird smash from Snaith.
James Bentley, writer

13. Protomartyr
Why Does It Shake?

At first, 'Why Does It Shake?' sounds like a low-key return from Detroit punks Protomartyr, powered by sparse drums and bass. Then, a minute in, Greg Ahee lets rip with a blast of guitar that could shatter your windows. The rhythm section continues to smoulder, and frontman Joe Casey's searching shouts are punctuated with more wailing from Ahee, the noise of which still shocks with repeated listens. Bloodthirsty stuff.
Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

14. Blank Realm
River Of Longing

'Illegals In Heaven', the new album by Brisbane indie mob Blank Realm, is their most hi-fi release yet, having been recorded at an actual studio. It was done in a single evening, mind, thereby retaining the quartet's vital imperfections. 'River Of Longing' is a highlight, starting with ecclesiastically chiming guitar before working a bouncy rhythm to the bone for four minutes. Place next to Dick Diver and Twerps in 2015's Australian indie victory parade.
Noel Gardner, writer

15. Menace Beach
Super Transporterreum

A 'transporterreum' is a misspelt German Star Trek beamer-downer (and Gordon Raphael's NYC studio), and the title of the latest track from these Yorkshire grunge-pop mentalists could just as easily refer to the song itself. For this fuzzy wonder beams us from a verse seemingly recorded at a 1994 Californian beach party to a chorus lurking in the goriest depths of a satanic metal band's sacrifice dungeon. And back again. Repeatedly. Handy in a tube strike.
Mark Beaumont, writer

16. Public Image Ltd
Double Trouble

It doesn't take a punk scholar to liken Sleaford Mods to the Sex Pistols. But for all their influence, 'Double Trouble', frothing lead single on PiL's upcoming 10th album 'What The World Needs Now...', puts the shoe on the other foot, as John Lydon spits, "*What, you fuckin' nagging again?/ About what?/ The toilet's fucking broken again?*" over a jittery Mods-style beat. A penny for your thoughts, Jason Williamson?
Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

17. Rat Boy
Tyler The Cover

For his new mixtape, 'Neighbourhood Watch', Jordan Cardy has done a sort-of cover of Tyler, The Creator's 'Cherry Bomb'. Although it shares the same over-distorted menace as the former Odd Future leader's original, it sounds more like it's going to break into The Prodigy's 'Firestarter'. Then it snaps into a shimmering, Mac DeMarco-style guitar line and plays calmly out. Just try and pin Rat Boy down right now.
Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

18. Ne-Hi
Drag

Hailing from the same scene as Twin Peaks, Chicago four-piece Ne-Hi released a promising six-track debut album last March, full of lethargic, breezy jams. 'Drag' is their first new track since, propelled by wiry, stop-start guitar lines and clopping drums. "*We don't talk/Talk a lot*", sings Jason Balla, commenting on the ease of disconnecting from your friends and their problems while mimicking the broken up sound of his guitar. A scrappy delight.
Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

19. Lil Wayne
He's Dead

Lil Wayne's latest, 'Free Weezy Album', is a Tidal exclusive, but the title also refers to his ongoing beef with Cash Money Records, who are allegedly preventing the release of next album proper, 'Tha Carter V'. This highlight is hooked around a sample of 'I See Ghosts' by As Animals and is another thinly disguised attack on Cash Money and label boss Birdman. So, pure frustration, rage and, as ever with Wayne, more than a touch of disturbing fanaticism.
Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

20. Jeff Wootton
The Eternal

Manchester-born Jeff Wooton is already *the* go-to session guitarist, having played with Albarn, Zinner, Eno and both Gallagher brothers over the years. 'The Eternal' is him finally stepping out of the shadows, and despite the African instrument that bookends it (an Imzad) being recorded in Mali with Albarn, the woozy vibe is one of total English melancholy. It's not a million miles from Faces man Ronnie Lane's more solemn moments, which is no bad thing.
Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

The curse of the Foo Fighters

The beleaguered band are rained offstage after just four songs during a festival headline slot in Quebec

Dave Grohl attempts to weather the storm in Quebec City, July 11, 2015

Foo Fighters really aren't having the best year. After Dave Grohl's leg-break following a tumble in Sweden and their cancelled Glastonbury appearance last month, comes the latest in a series of dramas to hit the band. Playing Le Festival d'été de Québec in Canada's Quebec City, their Saturday night (July 11) set was cut short thanks to some biblical rain and an epic lightning storm. "Quebec City, we'll be back... Mother Nature always wins..." tweeted the unlucky band after they left the stage.

Although it was one of the shortest headline shows in festival history, the Foos still managed to impress, with a career-spanning, mini-greatest hits set that kicked off with 'Everlong' before piling into 'Money Wrench', 'Learn To Fly' and 'Something From Nothing' from last year's 'Sonic Highways'. However, the extreme weather became too much, and the band left the stage due to health and safety concerns.

The shortened show also gave Grohl another chance to wheel out the flamboyant seating arrangement he debuted on American Independence Day (July 4) at the Foo Fighters' 20th anniversary gig at the Robert F Kennedy Memorial Stadium in Washington DC. At both shows the frontman sat atop the ostentatious throne, which he had designed himself when in hospital on super-strength painkillers. "I took a couple of oxycodones and drew a picture," commented Grohl from the stage in Washington. "I was high as a fucking kite."

Despite this unlucky streak, Grohl seems to be revelling in the new style of performance forced upon him by his injury. "The shows we've been doing lately are our favourite shows that we've ever done," he said in an interview. "What seemed like a setback at the time has turned into this beautiful blessing in disguise, where this throne and these crutches and these audiences make us play longer and harder than we ever have." ■ LEONIE COOPER

GETTY

The French Open

Foals' track-by-track guide to their Afrobeat and krautrock-inspired new album, 'What Went Down'

"WE WANTED IT TO BE LIKE THE MOMENT A PREDATORY ANIMAL GOES IN FOR THE KILL"
YANNIS PHILIPPAKIS

If you've trodden the traditional 'indie tykes to accomplished musicians to stadium sound' narrative arc, where do you go next? If you're Foals, it turns out you barely blink. After writing 'What Went Down' – which is set for release on August 28 – in Oxford for nearly six months, in early 2015 they decamped to the south of France to record. They holed up at La Fabrique in Saint-Rémy-de Provence, a studio that has recently hosted Morrissey's comeback album 'World Peace Is None Of Your Business' and Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds' 'Push The Sky Away', bringing along James Ford – the indie producer of the moment – who seems to have had a laid-back approach to making the follow-up to 2013's 'Holy Fire'.

"James didn't want to channel anything into clear pathways," guitarist Jimmy Smith states when we meet him and frontman Yannis Philippakis on the roof terrace of the north London practice studio where the Foals are working on their new live show. "Unlike other producers we've worked with, it was refreshing to see him just nudge things along."

The results take the band into a realm that pushes at all the seams of what Foals can be – without sounding alien or difficult. It's a record that is in parts sparser than 'Spanish Sahara' and in others more big riffing than 'Inhaler'. It highlights their way with chart-friendly, pastel-flavoured indie, yet yawns with its own existential bleakness, sometimes on the same tracks.

Often laid down in one or two takes, it's the freshest, most punk rock Foals album since their 2008 debut, 'Antidotes'. Philippakis seems coolly confident. "This is the record that most closely mimics the sound in our heads," he says. "We wanted it to be lean. Both in the individual songs – less reverb, more punchy – but also as an album, so there wasn't any negative space. We wanted to put the absolute best on there, and the 10 that made it are those that all of us were unanimous in liking."

Here the pair talk us through those tracks...

▶WHAT WENT DOWN

Yannis Philippakis: "The recorded version is the first one we ever played. I re-recorded the vocals but the rest of it is raw. It's one of those moments if you're lucky where things seem to materialise fully formed. We wanted it to feel like the moment when a predatory animal goes in for the kill: there's a savagery to it."

▶MOUNTAIN AT MY GATES

Philippakis: "I'd recorded the beginning riff on my phone ages ago. At the beginning it had a baggy feel, but became less so with more work. The central image – '*I see a mountain at my gates*' – was from me getting more interested in seeing what would come out lyrically when there wasn't a preconceived idea. Normally I write voraciously in books and journals, then harvest a lot of that for the record. This, though, came out instantaneously in the room."

▶BIRCH TREE

Philippakis: "This was written when me and Jimmy were hungover in Utrecht, onstage doing a soundcheck. It felt kind of consoling at the time. Then we worked on it in Oxford, and I got really into this boxy old drum machine, and so the kind of hip-hop quality of the groove came from that. It feels summery to me; it has a sense of what West Coast music should be."

▶GIVE IT ALL

Philippakis: "That was one where it felt like stripping all the support and architecture of the band away and allowing it to be just a vocal and some chords. That song, more than anything we've ever done, has been led by its vocal. It felt like the purest bit of songwriting we'd ever done. It felt like a step forward."

▶ALBATROSS

Jimmy Smith: "Chord-ally speaking, it's one of the most interesting things we've done. It goes

NABIL ELDERKIN, KIT MONTEITH, ANDY HUGHES

Foals at La Fabrique studio, France, April 2015

from major to minor. As my girlfriend's dad always says: major to minor is the key to great songwriting – look at The Beatles. You put a minor note over a major chord and it ends up as something kind of menacing but really warm as well."

Philippakis: "Some music nerd told me it has a 'tierce de Picardie' [a major chord to conclude a minor chord passage] – the end bit doesn't resolve in the way it's supposed to."

▶SNAKE OIL

Philippakis: "We wanted a big, riff-led song, just to revel in the heaviness of it. That's a song that wouldn't have been written were it not for 'Inhaler'. That song pierced the membrane on all of that, although it starts very sparse and kraut-y, then builds and builds."

Smith: "I was reading this book on krautrock and James [Ford] put this track through all of his modulation at the exact moment I was reading the climactic bits about Can."

▶NIGHT SWIMMERS

Smith: "There's a really weird element to our band, which is the sort of African thing. We didn't really know about it until Dave Sitek told us it was Afrobeat. The highlife [West African genre] vibe to this one is prominent, but there's this 909 drumbeat, Haçienda vibe too."

Philippakis: "We jammed it out to the same drum machines, but I remember it feeling very evocative of a summer's evening, the clarity that comes after a blistering day."

▶LONDON THUNDER

Philippakis: "It's probably informed by touring, being absent in some way. We've been to a lot of airports over the last few years, and sometimes there's this cool melancholy to an airport at a certain hour of the evening. It's about being away and having some sort of experience that changes you, and waiting to return, knowing that the world you're returning to will be subtly different, because you are."

▶LONELY HUNTER

Philippakis: "It was written in this studio in Hackney, and originally the music was sort of hip-hop, kind of grime-y. It didn't have lyrics for a long time – I was searching for a lyrical identity for the song, then I was really hungover on the day after New Year's Day, and went up to the Oxford studio, which was when these lyrics about a new dawn, a new year, came out of it."

Smith: "When we took it to France, Ford-o flexed his musical muscles a bit, and changed the whole dynamic."

▶A KNIFE IN THE OCEAN

Philippakis: "We were basically packing up to leave. We thought we had the album written. We'd played the other songs a lot, but that was one that just came out of a jam, once the pressure was off."

Smith: "James had gone out to get a sandwich or something and then he came back and we'd written it. He was like, 'what's that?' And then, 'That's definitely going on.' There's elements of jazz. It swings. It's got a Purdie shuffle [funk drum pattern pioneered by session man Bernard Purdie] as the drumbeat."

Philippakis: "The vocal line isn't a normal vocal line for me. I've never done anything like that before. Musically, I think it's the perfect closer to the record. It captures the essence of what the band is trying to do." ■ GAVIN HAYNES

THE MINI INTERVIEW

Serge Pizzorno

Kasabian

Are Kasabian writing new material at the moment?

"I sort of always am writing – never stop that. I'm always fishing, because you never know when it's gonna dry up. There's no plans for anything yet, but there's always tunes hanging around in the bag."

Have you thought much about the direction a new album could take?

"Not really, no. It's nice at the start, because it could be anything. But it'll definitely be different to the last record – they always are."

Any nerves about following up such a huge album as '48:13'?

"No, definitely not. We're in a good spot. Just excited to go again."

What do you make of The Libertines' comeback?

"I know Carl [Barât] and I want nothing but the best for him – he's such a nice guy. When their first record came out, it didn't really connect with me. I liked their vibe, but it wasn't something I was into. It's only now, when you look back, you realise how incredible they were. It's nice to see them back."

Are you into the return of *TFI Friday* to TV screens?

"Oh yeah man, that was the start of the weekend. You'd watch that before going to the park with your bottle of 20/20. I think it'll be great. It'd be nice to go on it. When you're a kid you're like 'we need to go on that one day'. Then it disappeared."

MINI INTERVIEW: KEVIN EG PERRY

New Order (l-r): Tom Chapman, Gillian Gilbert, Bernard Sumner, Stephen Morris and Phil Cunningham

Restoring order

New Order enlist chums La Roux and Iggy Pop as well as audio 'weaponry' for their 10th studio album

Ten years after their last album proper – 2005's 'Waiting For The Sirens' Call' – eight years after bassist Peter Hook left under a cloud, sparking a press war of words that endures to this day, and four years after they briefly reunited to play a few benefit gigs for an ailing label boss, New Order are finally back to making albums.

Their forthcoming 10th album will be called 'Music Complete', and arrives on September 25, featuring collaborations with the likes of La Roux, Iggy Pop and Brandon Flowers, while Tom Rowlands of The Chemical Brothers returns the favour of singer Bernard Sumner's appearance on 'Out Of Control', by producing two tracks, 'Singularity' and 'Unlearn This Hatred'.

As opposed to their last two guitar-based outings in 2001 and 2005, 'Music Complete' harks back to the loose, groove-based electronica of '80s classics like 'Low-Life'. "At the end of the '90s, I'd reached a point where I'd said everything I wanted to say about making an electronic record," says Sumner.

However, changes in technology since then have brought the band back to their roots. "In the old days, we were always struggling to get the sounds we wanted," Sumner explains. "Nowadays, though, the weapons work." At the same time, he doesn't feel 'Music Complete' is a piece of self-referencing retro: "You can't run away from yourself, can you? I write an electronic song in a certain way, and that's never going to change." Most of the album was made at Sumner's studio, and the farm that drummer Stephen Morris and returning keyboardist Gillian Gilbert share outside Macclesfield.

Brandon Flowers, who also appears on final track 'Superheated', is a long-time friend of the band, while La Roux, who features on three tracks ('Tutti Frutti', 'People On The High Line' and 'Plastic'), was a touring partner whose voice Sumner admired. "She's got a chest voice and a head one. I wanted her to sing from the chest so I asked her specifically to choose the head voice."

> **"I WRITE ELECTRONIC SONGS IN A CERTAIN WAY – THAT'S NEVER GOING TO CHANGE"**
> **Bernard Sumner**

And then there's an apperance from Iggy Pop, who the band met at a Tibet House charity gig organised by Philip Glass. "It was a special moment to play with him, actually, because the first time I ever went round to Ian Curtis's house, he said, 'Have you heard this?', and he put on the brand new Iggy record, and I thought it was absolutely brilliant," says Sumner.

His track – 'Stray Dog' – is a spoken-word piece, based on a melancholy poem Sumner wrote. "When I wrote it, I could hear him on it. So I did this bad Iggy impression, sent it to him. Got an email back saying he could do it, and we comped it together from three takes."

Sumner doesn't rule out the prospect of Iggy joining them to perform it live, but for now, the band seems more excited about taking a dance-fuelled album out on tour. "It's been amazing to see how well the dance stuff goes down live," agrees new bassist Tom Chapman. "That got us in the mood to write some more dance stuff." ■ GAVIN HAYNES

'MUSIC COMPLETE' Tracklisting

1. Restless
2. Singularity
3. Plastic
4. Tutti Frutti
5. People On The High Line
6. Stray Dog
7. Academic
8. Nothing But A Fool
9. Unlearn This Hatred
10. The Game
11. Superheated

MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

Neneh Cherry

BOOK
The Signature Of All Things by Elizabeth Gilbert

"This is set in the 18th and 19th centuries and is about a botanical explorer and his daughter, who ends up a botanist herself. It takes me away from the present day."

TV SHOW
Top Of The Lake

"It's a bit like *Twin Peaks*, with weird characters, but they're not wacky for the sake of it. Too often, female characters in drama end up shallow; here they're really deep and interesting."

FILM
The Godfather

"We've been talking about this a lot recently because we're off to southern Italy. I take a dose of *The Godfather* on a regular basis. You just climb inside and become part of it."

GAME
Scrabble

"I'm slightly allergic to games because I get really revved up and competitive, but travel Scrabble's a good one to have on tour. It takes a wobble because the letters are sunk."

HOME COMFORT
A piece of fabric

"This multi-tasks on many levels. You can wrap it around your body, drape it over a chair, put it on your head, chuck your child in it or put your shopping in it. I suppose it's a kickback from my African heritage!"

INTERVIEW: MATTHEW HORTON PHOTOS: NICK WILSON

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FROM Amateur Photographer

NME'S NEW DIRECTION IS A BOLD AND EXHILARATING STATEMENT

BY **MIKE WILLIAMS**

***NME*'s Editor on the exciting new era for the magazine and website**

The cat is out of the bag, and I couldn't be more excited. For the past few months here at *NME* we've been working in secret on the next phase of our evolution. The goal, throughout all of our research and development, has been to find new and inventive ways to connect with you, our audience, better than ever.

By talking to you and working closely with you as we developed new ideas, it was clear that what you wanted was brilliant content that you could enjoy and share quickly and conveniently. You wanted your voice to be heard and a platform to share opinions. You wanted *NME*'s unique access and opinions at your fingertips no matter where you were. So what we're giving you is a major brand transformation that will deliver on all of these things. A brilliant new, free, weekly magazine that will reach more than 300,000 people each issue; a new-look NME.COM that will bring you closer to the stories that you care most about; some shiny new digital products which I'll be able to tell you more about very soon; plus more live events, new video series and more interaction with you guys on new social platforms.

The new, free magazine launches on September 18 in the UK. As I type this, some of the *NME* team are locked away in a dark basement in *NME* Towers working on even more ideas to make sure it's not only a brilliant magazine, but that it gives you everything you asked us for. I'm confident that it will.

Music has got the power to unite people like nothing else can. It's there for you when you're down, it inspires you when you want to get up, it brings you together with your friends and it speaks to you on a level that nothing else can. It's the soundtrack to your life, basically.

Music is and will continue to be the heartbeat of *NME*. What's exciting is that we'll use our shared love of music to open up a wider world of culture and entertainment, taking in film, fashion, television, politics, gaming, technology and whatever else you want to talk about.

NME launched in 1952. In the 63 years since, we have evolved and transformed plenty of times, ensuring that we keep on growing and that we keep setting the agenda. The evolution of 2015 is our boldest ever move, and I'm delighted to be able to share the news with you at last. ■

▶For more opinion and debate, head to NME.COM/blogs

LOST ALBUMS #81

Caxton Press
This Ain't Living (2013)

Chosen by Chuck D, Public Enemy

"Caxton Press are a UK hip-hop group and this is a wonderful record. It should have been a hit record all around the world. They're from London and their line-up is eMCee Killa, Kingpin, Manage and DJ Snuff and also a singer/MC called Amy True. It's, like, one of my favourite records of the last two years. There are so many great artists and music out there, and that's why I think things need to be curated. That's why I've played them on my show on Rapstation.com. When I hear it I think, 'Wow, everybody should hear this record.' Everyone should look it up online. It doesn't sound like anyone else. It's a unique blend."

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** 2013
▶**LABEL** Caxton Press
▶**BEST TRACKS** This Ain't Living, Hunger
▶**WHERE TO FIND IT** Try rarekindrecords.co.uk and second-hand stores
▶**LISTEN ONLINE** YouTube

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IN THE STUDIO

John Lydon's band return with their 10th album – and it's fair to say the singer is very pleased with it indeed

Public Image Limited

John Lydon in Wincraft Studios, the Cotswolds, December 2014

"The record is excellent," says John Lydon of Public Image Ltd's forthcoming album, 'What The World Needs Now...'

But then he would say that. The former Sex Pistol is many things – provocative, hugely entertaining – but shy and retiring when it comes to trumpeting his own abilities isn't one of them.

"To my mind, this is the best thing I've ever done," he adds confidently.

He says the record has little in common with PiL's triumphant 'This Is PiL' from 2012, and that its roots go back to when he was writing his 2014 autobiography, his second, *Anger Is An Energy: My Life Uncensored*. During any free time, Lydon would write, and write and write, until he was worried his lyrics were going to "turn into psychobabble".

"Thankfully, talent will prevail and I found the answers. It's quite depressing analysing yourself, but I was writing a book so I had to." As a result, some of the songs sound like an accompaniment to said book. 'Whole Life Time', 'I'm Not Satisfied' and 'C'est La Vie' are as direct as their titles, and Lydon insists it's not worth trying to play anything on the album backwards at 78rpm in search of any secret meanings: "I don't do hidden messages and I am fairly direct as a human being."

'Double Trouble', meanwhile, started after Lydon had a minor disagreement with his wife over some plumbing. "The toilet was broken and we had to get it repaired, and from a basic family row it turned into quite a genius idea for a song. It's uplifting, like a good argument can be. I like getting something off me chest, not harbouring any resentment. It's the most powerful thing you can do, especially when there is resolution at the end of it. Absolutely."

Like its predecessor, 'What The World Needs Now...' was recorded in Wincraft Studios in the Cotswolds, the converted barn rented from former Spencer Davis Group and Blind Faith member Steve Winwood. Lydon and bandmates Lu Edmonds, Scott Firth and Bruce Smith loved the atmosphere when working there previously, and wanted to recreate it.

"We're a great bunch of people that really do like each other. And that helps," says Lydon. "I always thought being in a band meant animosity was the driving force, but that turns out not to be true. I learned that when we got back together in 2009, and the energy has remained ever since; vibrant."

There was never a doubt in Lydon's mind that there would be another album after 'This Is PiL', the band's ninth album, and their first in 17 years. "It's my life. Everything I've ever earned has gone into the music, and I take it very seriously," he says. Much of the funding for that album came from Lydon's foray into television with *Rotten TV*, *I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here* and *John Lydon's Megabugs*, but more notably, his infamous Country Life butter adverts. The latter in particular was widely ridiculed at the time but lucrative and necessary, he argues, as it gave him artistic freedom and the means to release another record.

"God, that was liberating," he says of being free of a label. "For 17 years I was cast into the wilderness. We were in such a hole it was financially impossible to crawl out of it and we found ourselves in a position where we could not afford to work. It was debilitating, but it got me involved in TV, and I liked the TV that I did," he adds. "But there was something missing; that musical pulse that I need. Everything I do has got that musical, poetic beat. Even when I talk there's a melody to it, I think. If I ever work out what it is it'll be the end of my career. Life must remain a mystery." ■ ANDY WELCH

THE DETAILS

- **TITLE** What The World Needs Now...
- **RELEASE DATE** September 4
- **LABEL** PiL Official
- **PRODUCERS** PiL
- **RECORDED** Wincraft, Cotswolds
- **TRACKS** I'm Not Satisfied, Know How, Bettie Page, Shoom
- **JOHN LYDON SAYS** "This record doesn't sound like anyone else. Karaoke is not our business."

"THE RECORD IS EXCELLENT. TO MY MIND, THIS IS THE BEST THING WE'VE EVER DONE"
JOHN LYDON

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ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM

"I WAS LISTENING TO A LOT OF CLASSIC FM AND I SOAKED IT UP"
MICHAEL HEAD

THIS WEEK...

Michael Head & The Strands – The Magical World Of The Strands

Noel Gallagher is just one of the many fans of cult Scouse musician Mick Head's recently reissued masterpiece

THE BACKGROUND

A firm fixture of the '80s Liverpool scene, Michael 'Mick' Head founded two critically acclaimed but unsuccessful bands – soul-influenced dreamers The Pale Fountains and their guitar-pop successors Shack. Head went quiet in 1991, when Shack's second album 'Waterpistol' lay unreleased for four years after their label went bust, their recording studio burned down and the only surviving master tape was mislaid in a hire car. In the meantime, Shack split and the details behind Head's absence emerged when 'The Magical World Of The Strands' was put together: he'd succumbed to a heroin habit. The Strands brought Head back into the public eye and he got clean. But by the time the album came out, Shack had reformed.

◀ STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

'The Magical World...' sleeve is bare-bones simple: the title chalked on a brick wall. Renaud Monfourny shot the photo of the Head brothers on the rear. The original artist credit is to 'Michael Head Introducing The Strands', amended to 'And The Strands' on the reissues a in grander, baroque psychedelic lettering.

FIVE FACTS

1 The album was the first release on Megaphone, a label founded by French promoter Stephane Bismuth, who had arranged for Shack to tour as backing band for their hero, Love's Arthur Lee.

2 Production was overseen by long-time Oasis associate (and producer of 'Definitely Maybe') Mark Coyle. Noel Gallagher's Sour Mash label would later release Shack's final album, 'On The Corner Of Miles And Gil'.

3 'Loaded Man' is the sole track on the album written and sung by guitarist and Mick's brother John Head. It is his first writing credit on any of the band's records.

4 Shorn of its string arrangement, a retitled 'Somethin' Like You' was released as the album's only single in October 1998. *NME*'s Johnny Cigarettes made it Single Of The Week.

5 Unreleased tracks from the album sessions included 'Lizzie Mullally' and 'Fin, Sophie, Bobby & Lance', both later recorded by Shack. These original versions appear on 'The Olde World', a new compilation of Strands outtakes assembled by Mark Coyle.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"I paint the sails/It's the job for me/I meet the whales/They'll come with me" – 'Queen Matilda'

Nautical imagery would later define Shack's 'HMS Fable', and here Head ponders a simpler life on the sea.

"Say, what's happened to all my clothes? What's happened to all my furniture? You know they can't just disappear" – 'X Hits The Spot'

The most upfront of the album's addiction songs, this finds a bewildered Head lamenting the loss of his possessions, stolen or sold.

"Seven long years since I've passed these gates/Fighting for our king/Dunno why, I couldn't say" – 'Hocken's Hey'

Head sings enigmatically about Cavaliers and Roundheads, over a plucked backing that seems to have rolled straight in from the 17th century.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"Head's gift is to invest simple acoustic reveries with a depth and melodic resonance that so many rock artisans claim as their own and so few genuinely possess."
John Mulvey, 9/10, November 22, 1997

WHAT WE SAY NOW

While honest on the perils of addiction, the murmured spell of 'The Magical World...' endures because the Heads never wallow in self-pity, always turning the Strands' rich acoustic music towards the sun.

FAMOUS FAN

"Mick Head is a genius and his brother John is a wizard. Everything Shack have ever done you can file under 'lost classic'."
Noel Gallagher, *NME*, February 11, 2012

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Making it was so relaxed, there was no pressure because we were just making it for ourselves. At the time I was listening to a lot of Classic FM, and I soaked that up, but I think I can experiment in a way that is accessible to a lot of people." – **Michael Head, *NME*, March 14, 1998**

THE AFTERMATH

With Shack, Head signed to London Records and released 1999's comeback 'HMS Fable', a Top 30 album and nearly *NME*'s Album Of The Year (beaten only by The Flaming Lips' 'The Soft Bulletin'). Two more Shack albums, '...Here's Tom With The Weather' (2003) and 'On The Corner Of Miles And Gil' (2006) followed, before the group disbanded. John Head assembled The Streams while his brother now leads Michael Head And The Red Elastic Band, whose second single 'Velvets In The Dark' came out this spring.

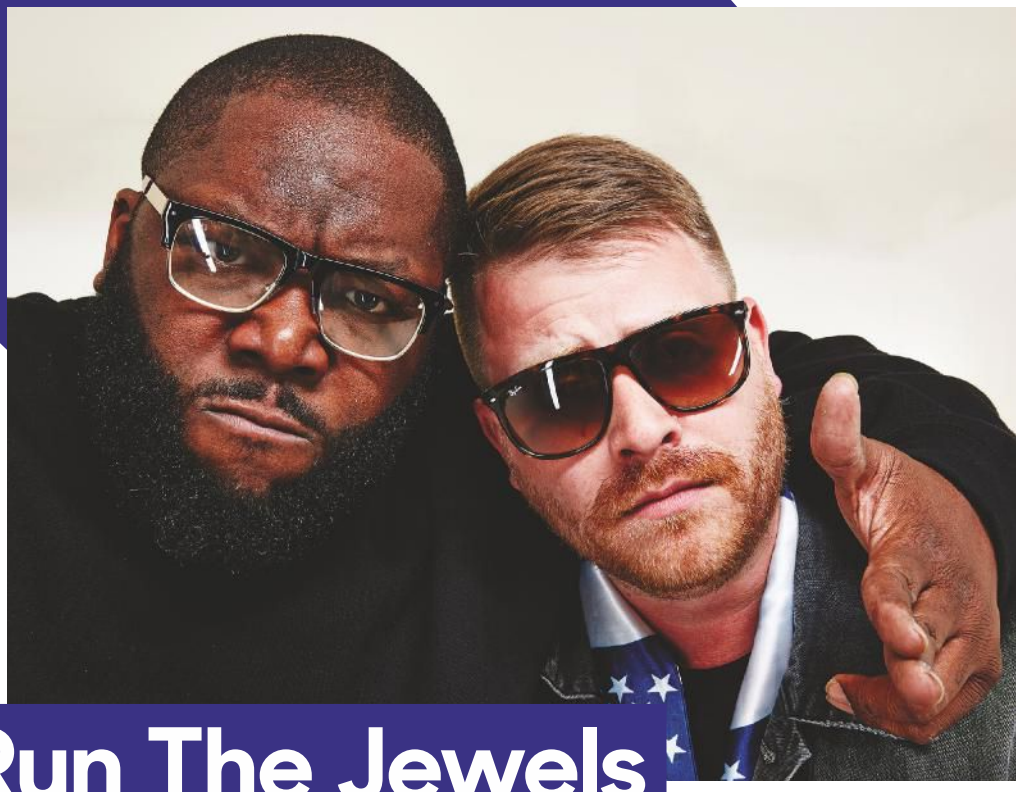
▶THE DETAILS

▶**RECORDED** 1993-1995 ▶**RELEASE DATE** March 1998 ▶**LENGTH** 51:12 ▶**LABEL** Megaphone ▶**PRODUCERS** Michael Head, Mark Coyle, John Head ▶**STUDIO** Avid, Liverpool; Oceanic, Liverpool; FON, Sheffield ▶**HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION** n/a ▶**UK SALES** 19,600 ▶**SINGLES** Somethin' Like You ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Queen Matilda ▶2. Somethin' Like You ▶3. And Luna ▶4. X Hits The Spot ▶5. The Prize ▶6. Undecided (Reprise) ▶7. Glynys And Jaqui ▶8. It's Harvest Time ▶9. Loaded Man ▶10. Hocken's Hey ▶11 Fontilan

WORDS: STUART HUGGETT PHOTO: RENAUD MONFOURNY

STAYING IN

THE BEST MUSIC ON TV, RADIO AND ONLINE THIS WEEK



Run The Jewels

WRTJ

▶**LISTEN** Beats 1, 2am, July 17

Apple Music's 24/7 worldwide radio station keeps on adding some brilliant guest presenters. Run The Jewels – aka Killer Mike and El-P – are among the latest signings, and they'll present a weekly show of their favourite tunes and surreal chat.

Pixies
Live At Eurockeenes

▶**WATCH** Sky Arts, 9pm, July 18

While you wait for Black Francis and his troupe to follow-up last year's 'Indie Cindy' album, catch up with what went down at their Eurockéenes festival in France last summer.

Black Francis

DEAN CHALKLEY, DEREK BREMNER, WUNMI ONIBUDO

Buddy Holly
Rock'N'Roll America: Be My Baby

▶**WATCH** BBC Four, 9pm, July 17

The series concludes with a look at Buddy Holly's death in a plane crash in 1959, and the rise of The Beatles in the early '60s. The programme also examines rock'n'roll's reinvention as pop music by marketing men.

Annie Nightingale
On Air With Annie Nightingale

▶**LISTEN** BBC Radio 2, 10pm, July 15

In the first half of a new two-part series, the broadcasting icon reflects on her six-decade-long career and some of its highlights, from presenting music TV show *That's For Me* to becoming the first female DJ at BBC Radio 1.

Richard Hawley
The Radcliffe & Maconie Show

▶**LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 1pm, July 21

When Richard Hawley broke his leg, he didn't sit around feeling sorry for himself. Instead, he wrote his new album 'Hollow Meadows', which he talks about this week.

GOING OUT

THE BEST LIVE EVENTS THIS WEEK

Latitude

Alt-J (above), Portishead and Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds headline the Suffolk festival, while Caribou, Wild Beasts and more also play.

▶**DATES** Southwold Henham Park (July 16-19)

▶**TICKETS** £192.50 from NME.COM/tickets with £8 booking fee

Micachu & The Shapes

Mica Levi returns her focus to The Shapes after dabbling in film soundtracks. Preview their new album this week.

▶**DATES** Glasgow Broadcast (July 15), Newcastle Cluny (16), Brighton Green Door Store (20)

▶**TICKETS** £8 from NME.COM/tickets with 80p-96p booking fee

5 TO SEE FOR FREE

1. The Ramona Flowers
Shacklewell Arms, London
▶July 17, 8pm

2. Beach Baby
Green Door Store, Brighton
▶July 18, 7pm

3. They Might Be Giants
Rough Trade East, London
▶July 20, 7pm

4. C Duncan
Rough Trade, Nottingham
▶July 20, 7pm

5. Kid Wave
The Old Blue Last, London
▶July 21, 8pm

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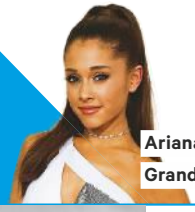
SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE


Ariana Grande

The Kinks

Justin Young

The Vaccines

THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING
'Blue Suede Shoes' – Elvis Presley

"My friend's dad was a big American rock'n'roll fan, so when I was three or four, I'd go to his house and this would always be playing. That definitely left a lasting impression on me, so the first record I ever got was an Elvis live record spanning the period from '55 to '57."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH
'Johnny B Goode' – Chuck Berry

"An early memory, when I was about six or seven, is of me and my dad recording a cover of this, 'cos it was my favourite song. It was on a little four-track. My dad loved music, so we had a room dedicated to it, full of instruments, with all these guitars, violins and a drumkit. At Christmas and birthdays, because I couldn't afford to buy my mum presents, we'd just write and record songs for her."

THE FIRST ALBUM I EVER BOUGHT
'Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' – The Beatles

"I must have been about eight or nine. I'd received some birthday money and wanted to buy a record for myself. I knew I liked The Beatles but I didn't know which record to buy, so I went into a little shop near where I lived with my mum and bought 'Sgt Pepper's...' based on the cover and recommendations."

"I WANTED TO BE ELVIS. I SANG HIS SONGS TO MY CLASS WHEN I WAS SIX"

THE SONG THAT MADE ME WANT TO BE IN A BAND
'Hound Dog' – Elvis Presley

"Again, it was The King! I wanted to be a musician when I heard Elvis. I wanted to be him. I would perform a capella versions of Elvis songs to my class when I was six or seven. I always used to sing 'Hound Dog' – although I wasn't any good! The whole package appealed to me. He was very seductive, not just as a musician, but as a character. He was very handsome and looked cool and had all these mannerisms and dance moves. It was aspirational. If I compared that to the more contemporary stuff I was listening to – or subjected to – at the time, it felt like he'd beamed down from space."

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO
'The Sidewinder Sleeps Tonite' – REM

"It's a song off 'Automatic For The People', which is a record I love, but it was one of the records that was always playing in the car when I was younger. Now whenever I hear it, it reminds me of being driven to school. I associate the lyrics "*Call me when you try to wake her up*" with being trapped in a car on a rainy morning going somewhere I didn't want to be going. So even though I love that record, it has these negative connotations to it."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE
'Lookin' For A Love' – Bobby Womack

"I love dancing actually – even though I'm terrible at it. There's so many songs that get me on the floor. 'Lookin' For A Love' is a song that I always DJ because I think it makes people want to dance. It's got a groove and a smoothness to it. It's sexy."

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE
'Break Free' – Ariana Grande

"She's the most unbelievable singer, so they're always a disaster. 'Break Free' is the one that's really hard. But I'm ambitious! I go to karaoke loads. I often see Vaccines songs in the book which is cool – somebody thinks it's funny and puts it on, but it normally only lasts about 10 seconds."

THE SONG I CAN'T GET OUT OF MY HEAD
'Cheerleader' – OMI

"It's my guilty pleasure but it's in my head constantly. it's just virulently catchy."

THE SONG I WISH I'D WRITTEN
'Waterloo Sunset' – The Kinks

"'Waterloo Sunset' has everything – perfect lyrics, melody, the way it moves and changes, it feels so complete and evocative. When I was 13, I got a 'Music Of The Millennium' compilation, which contained what people had voted the most important tracks of the 20th century. this was one – and I loved it."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL
'Without You' – Harry Nilsson

"Well, I want something to make people cry. I'm not the kind of guy who wants people to feel happy or uplifted at my funeral. How would I like my funeral to be? Long, drawn-out, with road closures and front-page coverage on at least two broadsheets. Possibly with the headline: 'If You Wanna Come Back, It's Alright'."

REM frontman Michael Stipe

WORDS: GARY RYAN PHOTOS: ED MILES, GETTY, CORBIS, DAVID ELLIS

NEWS DESK

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"If they're listening to Shaggy music or reggae music, they're not going to want to cut somebody's head off."

Shaggy suggests a unique way to defeat the global threat of ISIS.

THE NUMBERS

5

Hours Damon Albarn played as part of an Africa Express show before he was carted offstage by security Roskilde Festival in Denmark.

9,000

The amount of calories that festivalgoers burn from dancing and walking, a new study has found.

2

The number of hours that Nicki Minaj was late to London's Wireless Festival, blaming "travel issues". She missed her slot but performed during David Guetta's headline show.

8

Months that AC/DC drummer Phil Rudd will face under house arrest following his recent conviction on charges of drug possession and threats to kill.

WHO THE FUCK IS...

Elenberg Fraser

This is the Australian architectural firm who have designed a new skyscraper that looks like Beyoncé.

How can a building look like Beyoncé?

The company claim that the Premiere Tower, a 78-storey building which will house apartments, hotel rooms and retail space in Melbourne, looks like the singer in her 2013 video for 'Ghost' in which she dances while wrapped in a tube of stretchy fabric.

How bizarre...

The firm says the aim is to eventually replace the entire precinct with similar looking buildings. So keep your eyes peeled for Kelly Rowland and Michelle Williams-looking buildings on the streets of Melbourne.

+ GOOD WEEK +

The Charlatans

Former England footballer Gary Neville joined The Charlatans onstage in Manchester last week. The former Manchester United man played acoustic guitar on 'Just When You're Thinkin' Things Over' during a show at his new Hotel Football.

– BAD WEEK –

The Rolling Stones

Posters for The Rolling Stones' *Exhibitionism* event have been censored on the London Underground. The band were forced to alter an image showing the band's logo on a woman's crotch, promoting the retrospective at the Saatchi Gallery.

IN BRIEF

Jake's boutique

Jake Bugg has disclosed that he is working with Beastie Boys' Mike D on his new album. "He's a really cool guy," said Bugg while revealing details of LA recording sessions for his third record.

Rock, or your money back

Music fans in Finland are now entitled to refunds after disappointing gigs following the introduction of a new law. Ticketholders can get a refund if a performance is judged to be "well below reasonably expected standards".

▶Find these stories and more on NME.COM

Non Iver

Justin Vernon says he has no plans to write a new Bon Iver album or to play live with the band. "I definitely care about the Bon Iver thing a lot," he said. "But... there's only so much time you can spend with yourself before you just become an asshole."

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS JULY 10, 2015

01

Lucy Rose
Work It Out COLUMBIA

The former Bombay Bicycle Club collaborator goes in at the top of the chart with her second solo album, knocking Wolf Alice's 'My Love Is Cool' from the peak

NEW	2	Young Blood **Saint Raymond** ASYLUM
NEW	3	Perpetual Motion People **Ezra Furman** BELLA UNION
▲	4	In Colour **Jamie xx** YOUNG TURKS RECORDINGS
▼	5	Still **Richard Thompson** PROPER
NEW	6	Party Adjacent **Dan Andriano In The Emergency Room** ASIAN MAN
▼	7	How Big How Blue How Beautiful **Florence + The Machine** ISLAND
▼	8	My Love Is Cool **Wolf Alice** DIRTY HIT
▼	9	Coming Home **Leon Bridges** COLUMBIA
NEW	10	X **Ed Sheeran** ASYLUM
▲	11	Chaos And The Calm **James Bay** REPUBLIC
▼	12	Drones **Muse** HELIUM 3/WARNER BROS
NEW	13	Definitive Collection **Lionel Richie/Commodores** ISLAND
▼	14	Get To Heaven **Everything Everything** RCA
▼	15	The Monsanto Years **Neil Young/Promise Of The Real** REPRISE
▼	16	Before This World **James Taylor** CONCORD
NEW	17	Liquid Spirit **Gregory Porter** BLUE NOTE
▼	18	FFS **FFS** DOMINO RECORDINGS
▼	19	Sometimes I Sit And Think, And Sometimes I Just Sit **Courtney Barnett** HOUSE ANXIETY
NEW	20	Hot, Reckless, Totally Insane **Best Friends** FATCAT
▼	21	I Declare Nothing **Tess Parks & Anton Newcombe** A RECORDINGS
▼	22	Unknown Pleasures **Joy Division** LONDON
▼	23	Sound & Color **Alabama Shakes** ROUGH TRADE
▼	24	Alternative Light Source **Leftfield** INFECTIOUS MUSIC
NEW	25	Nevermind **Nirvana** GEFFEN
NEW	26	Why Make Sense? **Hot Chip** DOMINO RECORDINGS
▲	27	Unplugged In New York **Nirvana** GEFFEN
NEW	28	Carrie & Lowell **Sufjan Stevens** ASTHMATIC KITTY
▲	29	The Magic Whip **Blur** PARLOPHONE
NEW	30	Back To Front **Lionel Richie** MOTOWN
NEW	31	Back To Black **Amy Winehouse** ISLAND
▼	32	Are You Satisfied? **Slaves** EMI
▼	33	Wilder Mind **Mumford & Sons** GENTLEMEN OF THE ROAD/ISLAND
NEW	34	Royal Blood **Royal Blood** WARNER BROS
▼	35	Sticky Fingers **The Rolling Stones** POLYDOR
▼	36	Hozier **Hozier** ISLAND
▲	37	The Ultimate Collection **Paul Simon** SONY MUSIC CG
NEW	38	Aero Flynn **Aero Flynn** MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES
▲	39	English Graffiti **The Vaccines** COLUMBIA
▼	40	The Who Hits 50! **The Who** POLYDOR/UMC

The Official Charts Company compiles the Official Record Store Chart from sales through 100 of the UK's best independent record shops from Friday to Friday.

TOP OF THE SHOPS

THIS WEEK

VINYL TAP
HUDDERSFIELD

FOUNDED 1985

WHY IT'S GREAT The shop has a stage, on which anyone is welcome to drop in and play original material.

TOP SELLER LAST WEEK
'Coming Home' – Leon Bridges

THEY SAY "We have a huge selection of both new and used vinyl and CDs. With over 100,000 items in stock, we have all bases covered."

NEWSDESK COMPILED BY DAVID RENSHAW PHOTOS: CORBIS, CARL SUKONIK, TOM MARTIN

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NME.COM/
NEWMUSIC

NME NEW BAND OF THE WEEK

Okay Kaya

Norwegian newcomer's downbeat ballads sparkle with gloomy charm

Kaya Wilkins coughs violently and blows her nose into a tissue. "I didn't know how hard ballet dancers party! They've ruined me," says the 23-year-old Norwegian, who writes spidery love songs as Okay Kaya. In London preparing for her debut headline show, Kaya blames her cold on the cast of *Tree Of Codes*, the ballet for which her friend Jamie xx composed the score. The singer recorded vocals and guitar for the soundtrack and recently celebrated the show's premiere in Manchester with its cast. "The dancers were smoking like chimneys and drinking mad lagers," she explains. "I feel terrible."

Being snotty and miserable suits Kaya, who grew up in Oslo, the only daughter of a Norwegian mother and an American father. A self-taught guitarist, she grew up thrashing out metal dirges with older brother Sebastian, drummer in black metal band Asaru ("I was a shit guitarist, we just made noise!"). After moving first to London and then New York (where she still lives) to pursue a modelling career at 18, Kaya began writing twisted ballads in her Brooklyn bedroom. "I write when it's dark," she says, "songs about love and relationships, like 'fuck the world'. It feels over the top, but when they're written down I can chill."

Kaya's songs are both chilled and chilling. Last year's acoustic debut track 'Clouds' twinkles like a music box. Rodaidh McDonald (Adele, The xx, King Krule) produced the dark, slow 'Damn Gravity', and 'Clenched Teeth' builds tension with fingerpicking and wispy vocals. New single 'I'm Stupid But I Love You' is her softest track yet, an old song rewritten on piano with Canadian songwriter Tobias Jesso Jr, who Kaya met last winter. "I stayed alone in LA for Christmas. I didn't know anyone, so my manager set us up," she explains. The pair, who have "got really close and started collaborating", toured together earlier this year. Kaya admits she "died of stage fright," but as she works towards a debut album with a secret list of collaborators, her insecurities are evaporating. One thing that won't change though, is her subject matter. "Jamie xx asked me recently if I'll ever write a happy song," she finishes, "I was like, 'What do you think?'" ■ BEN HOMEWOOD

▼ ON NME.COM/NEWMUSIC NOW
▶Hear 'I'm Stupid But I Love You'

▶THE DETAILS

▶**BASED** New York
▶**FOR FANS OF** The xx, King Krule
▶**SOCIAL** instagram.com/okay.kaya
▶**BUY IT NOW** 'I'm Stupid But I Love You' is out now on Hot Charity
▶**SEE HER LIVE** Okay Kaya is set to tour the UK later this year
▶**BELIEVE IT OR NOT** Kaya spent Christmas Day eating spaghetti with *12 Years A Slave* star Chiwetel Ejiofor. "My manager put me in touch with him – we went for dinner in Los Angeles and we're good friends now," she says

DANIEL ZVEREFF

MORE NEW MUSIC

Pearl Charles

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Pearl Charles

Think of Pearl Charles as a stoner Lana Del Rey or Jenny Lewis with grit. Her new song 'You Can Change' is the sound of a girl trying her hardest to convince someone to join her on the dark side, before admitting sadly that she can't twist this boy's arm into the deal. His loss. Pearl's debut EP is out on US cassette label Burger Records from July 28.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/PearlCharlesMusic

▶HEAR HER soundcloud.com/pearl-charles-music

Moth Trap

Moth Trap only have three demos to their name right now but they're already looking like one of London's most exciting new acts. 'My Size' is a cerebral and heartfelt letter to a cruel beau while 'Nocturnal' is a cagey night-time affair redolent of early PJ Harvey.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/mothtrapmusic

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/mothtrapmusic

▶SEE THEM LIVE London The Sebright Arms (July 29)

Fronteers

Hull youngsters Fronteers are the latest signing to Human Music, a new indie label co-founded by George Ezra producer Cam Blackwood. Drawing on The Coral's jangly indie, the fresh-faced quartet's debut track, 'Youth' has a distinct air of Northern romanticism to it backed by breezy guitars and rollicking drums.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/fronteershull

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/fronteers

Tempest

The debut single by twins Toma and Andy Banjanin is a real treat for fans of psychpop. With a jangling lick reminiscent of Ratatat at its core, 'Tidal Wave' creates a dizzy, flowery atmosphere with the aid of harps and flutes. The hooky vocals are the band's finest asset, though, as shown in the track's pounding chorus.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/tempestband

▶HEAR THEM tempestgroovin.bandcamp.com

▶SEE THEM LIVE London Sebright Arms (July 21)

Carriages

As Sleeping States, Markland Starkie released some of the best UK underground indie of the past decade. Accordingly, his new band Carriages are already showing promise. But the Bristol trio wield a fuller sound that's built around spidery guitar lines and pacey drumming. Their 'Canaveral' EP is online now.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/carriagescarriages

▶HEAR THEM carriagescarriages.bandcamp.com/

Brightly

His songs might kick off sounding like formulaic indie folk, but Melbourne's Charlie Gleason writes such heartbreaking lyrics it's hard not to indulge yourself. With its mix of folk, pop and electronica, debut album 'Oh, Infinity' is a profound collection of tracks with a stellar lineup of Melbourne musicians behind it.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/wearebrightly

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/wearebrightly

Shitwife

Snowy Nasdaq

"Selling music for $$ is a sucker's game," says Liam Halliwell, whose Snowy Nasdaq project has seen him release 18 records online in just 18 months. Recorded anywhere from train carriages to airports, his erratically structured zero-shits-given indie is filled with rusty guitars and plenty of fuzz.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/snowynasdaq

▶HEAR HIM snowynasdaq.bandcamp.com

Shitwife

Hardcore acid-punk band Shitwife make a sound that's a cross between the electronics of Aphex Twin and the drum hysterics of Lightning Bolt. The London duo are set to release their debut album 'Big Lad' on August 28, featuring such tracks as 'High Octane Party Banger". It's the kind of record that should come with a warning label.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/shitwife

▶HEAR THEM shitwife.bandcamp.com

▶SEE THEM LIVE London Wyrd Out Festival (August 22)

→

BAND CRUSH

Bethany Cosentino

Nothing

"We have friends from Philly called Nothing. They made my favourite record of last year ('Guilty Of Everything'). Whenever they're are in LA they stay with [guitarist] Bobb. I go round and we play *Rock Band* together, usually doing '90s alternative stuff. They're rad if you're into shoegazey heavy stuff."

AARON FARLEY, JULIE R KANE, CHAD KAMENSHINE, ANDY WEST, PHIL SHARP, KALEB MARSHALL

Ancient River

Negative Space

Taking cues from the severe and stripped-down approach of Shellac, Folkstone post-hardcore dudes Negative Space place barked vocals against a bloody terrifying backdrop of distorted guitars and pummelling drums. Vanity Pill Tapes have released the band's self-titled cassette.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/negativespacepunx
▶HEAR THEM vanitypilltapes.bandcamp.com

Manor

Almost two years have passed since Melbourne boy/girl duo Manor released their infectious single, 'Architecture'. 'Can You Hear Me Talking At You', the first cut from their upcoming EP of the same name, shows they haven't lost their knack for layering earwormy riffs over syrupy beats though.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/manorband
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/wearemanor

Ciggie Witch

Fronted by The Ocean Party member Zac Denton, Ciggie Witch's genre has been described as 'durry pop' – Australia's answer to slacker pop. There's a second LP on the way and lead single 'Look Of Pain' is a brooding display of self-indulgent lyrics that makes hating yourself a little bit fun.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/ciggiewitch
▶HEAR THEM ciggiewitch.bandcamp.com/

Ancient River

With a healthy dose of Black Rebel Motorcycle Club's more lysergic moments about them, the Florida psych-rockers specialise in woozy West Coast wig outs. Standout track 'This Is The Time' goes a step-further too – recalling the Brian Jonestown Massacre with its driving drums and free-playing fretwork to create gentle, dreamy rock'n'roll. Recent album 'Keeper Of The Dawn' is a mist that's worth getting lost in.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/ancientriverband
▶HEAR THEM ancientriver.bandcamp.com

Cleopold

Moustachioed Melbourne crooner Cleopold is the first signing to Aussie downtempo hero Chet Faker's newly established indie, Detail Co Records. Having spent the last few years penning tracks for Miami Horror and scoring films from the likes of Roman Coppola, Cleopold is stepping out on his own with 'Down In Flames', a wounded R&B ballad punctuated by yearning funk guitars and his soulful falsetto. He's currently in Chet's studio recording a full LP.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/cleopoldmusic
▶HEAR HIM soundcloud.com/cleopold

Palehound

Palehound

Boston's Palehound are gearing to release their first long player 'Dry Food' on August 14. Lead single 'Molly' is a fast and frenetic lo-fi anthem where vocalist and chief songwriter Ellen Kempner displays her sharp cunning, leaving little room for criticism. She's roommates with Speedy Ortiz's Sadie Dupuis and it's evident in the music.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/palehoundsounds
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/explodinginsoundrecords

Memory Maze

With gloopy synths, intricate guitar melodies and funky bass aplenty, Yorkshire producer Gavin Ellis' music should find fans in anyone who likes MGMT. Inspired by master producer Dave Fridmann his wavy electro-

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

Destruction Unit

Mykki Blanco

PELUCHE WUNDERGROUND

The latest track to be released on producer Dan Carey's Speedy Wunderground label is by London trio Peluché. Called 'The Guy With the Gammy Eye', the track is drenched in space echo delay and a beat that recalls trip-hop pioneer Tricky's more indie moments. It's out August 10.

DESTRUCTION UNIT RETURN

Merchandise and Parquet Courts' doomy touring buddies Destruction Unit will release a new album via Sacred Bones on September 18. 'Negative Feedback Resistor' is self-described as "crazed-psychedelic-freek-noise guerrilla warfare".

DELTASONIC TURNS 15

Liverpool's Deltasonic label (The Coral) has announced plans for its 15th anniversary. Two new signings, Hidden Charms and The Vryll Society, will release fresh material this month – alongside a host of re-issues from the likes of '00s favourites The Dead 60s and The Basement.

MYKKI GETS A LABEL

Cali rapper Mykki Blanco has launched a label called Dogfood Music Group, with a compilation of new music kicking off their discography. 'C-ore' is out on September 18 and features members of Blanco's creative community including Yves Tumor, PsychoEgyptian and Violence.

▶For daily new music recommendations and exclusive tracks and videos go to NME.COM/NEWMUSIC

BUZZ WORDS: MATT WILKINSON, JAMES BENTLEY, MATILDA EDWARDS, TIM HAKKI, DAVID RENSHAW, DAN CARSON, SAM LAVAN

Memory Maze

pop is full of colourful hooks. His debut album 'From The Outside In' is released on August 14.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/memorymazemusic
▶HEAR HIM soundcloud.com/memorymaze

Gibberish

This tropical pop band hail from the mountains of Arkansas, which prodigious brothers Derek and Lorie Bromley call home. Their otherworldly sound comprises both the rhythmic jams of Can and the innovative, experimental psych-pop of Animal Collective. Recent album 'Winter Coat' is a mind-spinning record that features some kaleidoscopic artwork to boot.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/gibberishmusic
▶HEAR THEM gibberishmusic.bandcamp.com

Cadenza

On top of being the son of reggae DJ David Rodigan, Oliver Rodigan's musical credits also include his year-long stint with Diplo in Major Lazer. He's now working alone, and latest song 'Foundation' is a timely release. Its heavy dancehall influence and invigorating vibes make it a perfect choice for summer.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/cadenzacadenzamusic
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/cadenzacadenza

Lewis Del Mar

Lewis Del Mar are a new duo operating out of New York's Rockaway Beach neighbourhood. Taking cues from Everything Everything's hyperactive art-rock and Alt-J's esoteric pop, the pair have come up with the recipe for an underground indie hit on their debut track, 'Loud(y)'. Its oscillating bass grooves and skittish percussion add a wonky, awkwardly danceable tint to it.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/lwsdlmr
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/lewis-del-mar

The Hussy

Wisconsin garage-punk duo The Hussy describe themselves as a "trash band" - which goes a long way in explaining why such incendiary acts as King Khan & BBQ Show, The Black Lips and Ty Segall have invited the band to play shows with them. Heather and Bobby Hussy released their third album 'Galore' in June and it features such fine works as 'Take You Up', a lucid, slide guitar-laden surf groove that ticks all the boxes.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/thehussyknowsall
▶HEAR THEM thehussy.bandcamp.com

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

Collect Records

▶FOUNDED 2009 by Geoff Rickly from No Devotion
▶BASED NYC
▶KEY RELEASES Touché Amoré – ...To The Beat of a Dead Horse (2009), Cities Aviv – Your Discretion Is Trust (2015), Creepoid – Cemetery Highrise Slum (2015)
▶RADAR SAYS 2015 is going to be a busy year for Collect, which is run by working musicians. New albums by Nothing, Wax Idols and No Devotion are on the way.

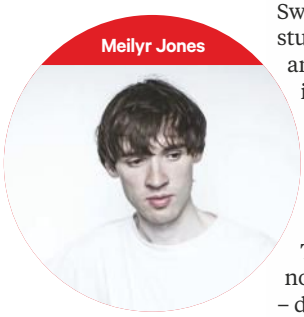
NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

This week's columnist
JEHNNY BETH
Savages

AT THE RACES

Meilyr Jones is a musician born in Cardiff who lives and works in London. I met him for the first time a few years ago when he was fronting the band Race Horses, during a festival curated by British Sea Power in Tan Hill, Yorkshire. He is a very talented musician, the kind who's able to write a classic pop song as well as directing an orchestra. He is bright, a fast learner, and will play any instrument that happens to fall into his hands. He also loves talking about music and life in general. It was after one of our long conversations that he left a note on my kitchen table saying, "Don't let the fuckers get you down." So I owe him for being the inspiration behind the Savages song 'Fuckers' too. He just released his first track as a solo artist, 'Refugee'. The video shows him playing piano at Fish Factory (a studio in north London) and recording the real take of the track. Mind blowing!

I met several members of the band **ZAYK** from Switzerland a few years ago, when they were still students in London. The band had many names and formations before becoming ZAYK. Mostly instrumental, partly improvised, it is music made by a bunch of music lovers who got together every other week in a trashy rehearsal place in the middle of Langstrasse quarter in Zurich; "just for fun", until they played their first gig and really started working on their music two and a half years ago. They quickly got a nice following back home and now their debut album is due sometime in September – depending on "how quick the process of pressing the vinyls will proceed". Let's hope the manufacturers make this a priority so we can hear it soon!



Meilyr Jones

"Meilyr Jones is able to write pop or direct an orchestra"

Ayse Hassan has been playing bass alongside me in Savages for the past four years. You'd know it if you've seen her play: one cannot dream of a better sidekick to form a band with. Intelligent, determined, groovy, loud, sexy; she's everything one would dream a bassist to be, and a good friend too. Considering my own experience, I wasn't surprised when I heard she formed a new project with fellow bassist Kendra Frost called **KiteBase**. Mainly led by electronics (Ayse has a big crush), bass and vocals, their music blends the craft of pop with industrial music and good solid riffs! The project is due to launch in the coming months with a few gigs very soon. Watch this space! ■

Next week: Swim Deep

▶For daily new music recommendations and exclusive tracks and videos go to NME.COM/NEWMUSIC

KINGKE

After releasing one of hip-hop's landmark albums, Kendrick Lamar is on top of the world. Alex Denney talks riches, responsibilities and immortality with Compton's finest. Just don't mention the politics, OK?

PHOTOS: SHAMIL TANNA

NDRICK

With the amount of praise that's come Kendrick Lamar's way of late, you'd be forgiven for thinking the guy could actually fly. So when the 28-year-old new king of West Coast hip-hop went and did exactly that in the video for 'Alright', it was hard to tell where the special effects ended and the superpowers began.

The politically charged video, released on June 30, found Kendrick floating over parts of LA and San Francisco and rapping on lampposts ("Kendrick Lamar spotted on traffic light," ran a headline on an *lalive.com* story about the shoot) as familiar street scenes play out below. Then he comes crashing back to earth when a white policeman guns him down.

It's another milestone moment in what is rapidly proving to be a momentous 2015 for the rapper. In March, he pulled off one of the most ambitious records in hip-hop history in 'To Pimp A Butterfly' – an album of such dazzling scope and complexity, it reportedly sent Kanye West scampering back to the drawing board on his own latest opus, the highly anticipated follow-up to 2013's 'Yeezus'.

"I wanted this record to be talked about the same way Bob Dylan or The Beatles or Jimi Hendrix are talked about," Kendrick tells us while waiting for an *NME* photoshoot in an east London studio. "When my time has come on earth, I want it to live longer than me, for the grandkids and their kids."

Where Kendrick grew up, longevity wasn't really much of a consideration. Born and bred in Compton, Los Angeles County – spiritual home of gangsta rap and a focal point in the murderous Crips and Bloods rivalry – he escaped the life of a gangbanger after a friend was fatally shot; he was approached in a parking lot by another friend's grandmother, who asked him if he accepted God (he was eventually baptised in 2013).

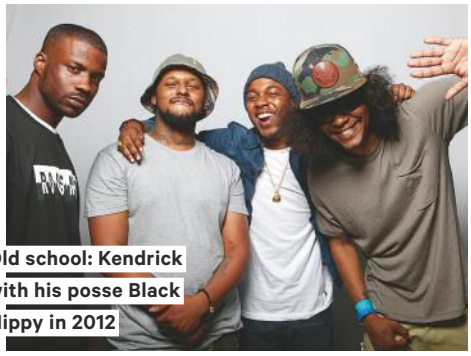
Signing to Top Dawg Entertainment at the age of 16, Kendrick worked up a string of solo releases under the K-Dot pseudonym, forming the Black Hippy posse with labelmates Ab-Soul, Schoolboy Q and Jay Rock. Dropping the K-Dot moniker, he alerted Dr Dre to his talent with 'Ignorance Is Bliss', a track from 2010 mixtape 'Overly Dedicated', but it was the following year's 'Section 80' that proved his breakout release, leading to a deal with Aftermath and the release of his major-label debut, 2012's 'good kid, mAAd city', which introduced him to a wider audience as hip-hop's pre-eminent chronicler of inner city strife. Then, in August 2013, he contributed an incendiary verse on Big Sean's 'Control', which lived up to its promise to "*murder*" almost every new rapper on the planet still drawing breath (including Big Sean), and lit a rocket under the arse of hip-hop in the process.

"I'm not one of those people that says, 'When I get rich I'm gonna keep it extra 100 and be on the block all day,'" says Kendrick, who recently bought a (modest) new pad in nearby Eastvale, in Southern California. "No! It's like this: you from the hood, you wanna get out the hood. The initiative is to get out, for somebody to get out to show us some type of way of life."

Still, Kendrick is proud of his hometown – after all, it's Compton that brought his beloved G-funk to global attention, via the music of Dr Dre. But whereas for many people his age, going home means nothing worse than two days of dad jokes and the incessant quizzing of your dietary regime, for Kendrick, there are bigger things to worry about.

"You gotta be a stupid motherfucker, man, to have success and still wanna hang on the block," he says. "I don't give a fuck who you are, you dumb. You playing with fire, and you haven't accepted change."

It's the end of May when *NME* meets Kendrick in London, half a world away from his former LA stomping ground. He's in good spirits, and why not? He's just hit Number One on the US singles chart for the first time, with a guest spot on the latest Taylor Swift blockbuster, 'Bad Blood'. The collab prompted 'sell-out' accusations, but for Kendrick the move made perfect sense. "I appreciate Taylor Swift for supporting not only my music but the hip-hop culture as a whole," he told *Associated Press* last year. "There's really no gap. It's music and it feels good."



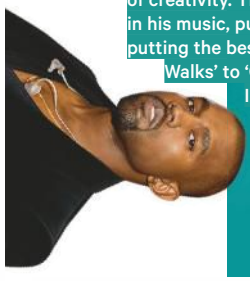
Old school: Kendrick with his posse Black Hippy in 2012

GETTY

KENDRICK ON KANYE

What the young charge thinks of the Glastonbury headliner, who he supported on tour in 2013

"I definitely learned from Kanye, just from being a fan of his work and the steps that he made to get where he's at. Are there any similarities? Hell yeah, there's similarities, [in terms of] not backing down or being afraid of creativity. That's something he always put in his music, putting his best foot forward, putting the best ideas on wax, from 'Jesus Walks' to 'Gold Digger', you know... I learned a lot on that tour, from his production and how he went all out, spending the last dollars just to make sure that tour was next level."



"I WANT THIS RECORD TO BE TALKED ABOUT LIKE DYLAN OR THE BEATLES"

During the photoshoot, he breezes through a repertoire of worldly wise poses; a philosopher-king surveying the lay of the land before him. Clad in off-white, unbranded sportswear, he talks in a mellow lilt just a few notches above a whisper, like a cat drowsing in the midday sun. Kendrick might be rap royalty, but nothing about the guy *shouts*.

"The positive outweighs the negative, I can tell you that," he says of his newfound superstar status. "I can take care of my family. I get to socialise with people outside of what I know and meet different cultures. Growing up in an urban community, you don't give a fuck. That's just how the mentality is. But you gotta learn to respect different types of people. And that was a lesson to me – I had to get out of my own nutshell."

As even a cursory spin of 'To Pimp A Butterfly' suggests, adapting to the trappings of fame has not been easy for Kendrick. The monster success of 'good kid, mAAd City' delivered him from the struggles of Compton, but the new album wrestles with a dilemma of a different sort. To paraphrase Snoop Dogg's wry cameo on 'Institutionalized': you can take the boy out the hood, but can you take the hood out the homie?

"You take a person out the neighbourhood, give 'em a record deal, give 'em advance money," Kendrick says, "but what do you do with that money? Put more guns and drugs in the hood? I always remember what 50 Cent said when he got his first advance: he said he took that money and he bought dope. It's really just like that.

"I was still on my momma's couch when I got signed. You're trapped in the mentality of not knowing the responsibility you have when you get fame. It's something that I recognised early."

Not that Kendrick, who swapped rhymes with Fiddy on 'We Up' in 2013, is judging his peers. He's simply acknowledging how a hood state of mind can become a prison for rappers. But making it off the streets intact brought other problems, too. Survivor's guilt stalks every moment of 'To Pimp A Butterfly', and especially the harrowing 'u', where he drunkenly berates himself for being out on tour when another friend from back home was shot, and for not being around to support his teenage sister when she became pregnant. ↣

Siren song: Kendrick performs at the BET Awards in June

When 'good kid...' blew up, Kendrick became a role model to thousands of kids, who looked up to the author of modern-day ghetto gospel like 'Sing About Me, I'm Dying Of Thirst' for spiritual guidance. Kendrick admits it was difficult to fulfil this role while still battling his own demons. "[Being a leader] wasn't even an ambition, to be real with you," he says. "It's something I didn't wanna take responsibility for. Nobody do, especially when you're still searching for answers for yourself. I don't have the answers! I tell people that all the time. I'm still learning, but I think that's what makes people connect with me. I don't point the finger."

While preparing to make 'To Pimp A Butterfly', Kendrick looked to other black cultural and political leaders for inspiration, like his hero Tupac Shakur, plus Marcus Garvey, Huey Newton and Nelson Mandela. On tour in South Africa, he even made a visit to the prison complex at Robben Island where Mandela was incarcerated under apartheid. The whole experience affected him profoundly.

"My teachers always made Africa seem like this hellhole place," he says. "It's like they didn't want you to go, so when I get out there and I see all these beautiful people, I see these kids living in tents and they still had these smiles on their faces. And then you have this whole other side, as far as scenery – it's this paradise that nobody never spoke of at school. I got a whole new perspective on life from going out there, it was refreshing."

Perhaps the trip helped inspire one of the record's more divisive moments: 'i''s attempt to reclaim the N-word as a source of pride by exploring its (allegedly African) roots: "*Well, this is my explanation straight from Ethiopia/N-E-G-U-S definition: royalty; King royalty – wait listen/N-E-G-U-S description: Black emperor, King, ruler, now let me finish/The history books overlook the word and hide it*". The legendary comedian Richard Pryor, who's namechecked on the album, once wrote about his own life-changing experiences in Kenya, whereupon seeing what he perceived to be the dignity and unbroken spirit of its people, he vowed never to use the N-word again in his set. But Kendrick says not using it at all might be a stretch too far at this stage in his career.

"I don't know if I can stop," he says. "The closest I can do to stopping is putting the root word, negus, on my album. But I don't know if I'm there mentally to stop saying the n-word yet. I dunno, maybe one day. That's 27 years of reversing that word, I probably been saying that since I was one year old."

At times, experiencing 'To Pimp A Butterfly''s 79 minutes of gruelling catharsis can feel like being locked in a cupboard full of skeletons and left to fight your way out. But the record is so much more than a personal voyage of discovery. Billed by the prominent critic Robert Christgau as a "strong, brave, effective bid to reinstate hip-hop as black America's CNN", it speaks eloquently to the increasingly angry, despairing mood among African American communities in the States right now. 'The Blacker The Berry' echoes popular outrage at recent police killings of black citizens, for instance, while 'Alright' touches on police violence in a more general sense: "*We hate po-po/Wanna kill us dead in the streets for sure*."

"I DON'T HAVE THE ANSWERS! I TELL PEOPLE THAT ALL THE TIME. I'M STILL LEARNING"

GETTY, JOEY MALONEY

So when we're informed that politics is off the menu as a topic of conversation before sitting down to chat with Kendrick, it's hard not to feel short-changed. Swedish journalist Mats Nileskär – the guy whose Tupac interview Kendrick samples at the end of the record – persuasively suggested that these songs double as a soundtrack to an emerging civil rights movement in the US. Surely their author would have a word to say about that?

"No politics!" barks Kendrick's manager, who's been lurking silently in the background throughout our interview, as soon as I try and smuggle in a question. "Kendrick's here to promote his album."

"But surely the album is political!" I splutter indignantly. "Isn't it relevant to..."

"No politics," the manager replies, with an air of finality.

Perhaps Kendrick feels burned by past comments made on the subject? Asked about the police killing of Michael Brown that sparked civil unrest in Ferguson, Missouri last summer, he told *Billboard*: "What happened to [Michael Brown] should've never happened. Never. But when we don't have respect for ourselves, how do we expect them to respect us?"

The remark prompted outcry among online commentators – including Azealia Banks, who branded it "the dumbest shit I've ever heard a black man say" – but Kendrick says his reluctance to speak on political affairs has nothing to do with the incident. "I don't care," he says, frowning for the first time today. "My life is already written. Everything I'm doing is a rerun of what God already played out for me – I don't do no apologies. Everything I said I meant, period. Those who get it, they understand. Those are the people that need it. If you don't, then obviously you're not going through that, so you don't really care."

Prominent among the criticisms of Kendrick's comments was that, although his claim that change must "come from within" is all very well and Christian, it ignores a system that is stacked overwhelmingly against people of colour in the States. What about reform of the nation's police force, for example? Or its gun laws?

Kendrick Lamar in London, 2015

Or its institutionally racist penal system, alluded to in Kanye's 'New Slaves'? Does none of that make Kendrick want to lend his support to the wave of protest currently sweeping the country?

"It all depends on what lending your support is," says Kendrick, who appears to take a dim view of politics in general. ("People in high places are just the biggest thugs," he ventures at one point.) "A lot of people say lending your support is going out there and talking, protesting. Personally I'd rather do the groundwork inside the city. I feel like there needs to be more action instead of talk – we need to be at the youth detention centres, the boys' and girls' clubs and the parks. It's about showing your face to these kids."

Kendrick is as good as his word on that front: he was honoured by the California state senate this year for his charitable work in Compton. Another, higher-profile return to the hood came with the video shoot for lead single 'King Kunta', where he preached his message of empowerment from the rooftops of the Compton Swap Meet, the recently closed flea market where rappers would hawk their wares in the early days of gangsta rap.

"That was just the first time the homecoming was broadcast," says Kendrick, with a touch of pride. "It's like that every time I go back. Thing is, I can never be the artist who raps, '*Niggas hate me in the hood 'cos I'm rich*', because I never really felt that type of hate. There was always a mutual understanding."

It's tough to square the modest figure of today with the madness that surrounds his every move in 2015. There may be no going back for Kendrick Lamar, but perhaps you can't take the hood out of the homie after all. ■

▶Kendrick Lamar plays Reading And Leeds Festivals (August 28-30)

READING LEEDS 2015

KENDRICK'S CONTROVERSIES

You don't get to be king without putting a few noses out of joint

▶2013
THE 'CONTROL' VERSE
Kendrick's immortal verse on 'Control' by Big Sean (left) in 2013 saw him start beefs with most of hip-hop (J Cole, Big KRIT, Wale, Pusha T, Meek Millz, A$AP Rocky, Drake, Tyler, The Creator, Mac Miller). A clutch of diss tracks swiftly followed.

GQ COVER STORY
The men's style bible was slammed by Top Dawg Entertainment head honcho Anthony Tiffith for its "offensive" cover feature on Kendrick. The alleged "racial overtones" led the rapper to cancel his performance at the mag's Man Of The Year party.

▶2014
FERGUSON
Kendrick's imploring of black communities to "respect themselves" after a spate of high-profile killings of African American men by police angered both Azealia Banks (right) and Kid Cudi.

GRAMMY SNUB
'good kid, mAAd City''s failure to win best album at the Grammys in 2014 caused consternation among many, not least with four-times winner-on-the-night Macklemore, who sheepishly texted Kendrick to say, "You got robbed."

▶2015
BET AWARDS
Fox news rent-a-gob Geraldo Rivera was unimpressed with Kendrick's cop-baiting performance of 'Alright' at the BET Awards last month, saying, "Hip-hop has done more damage to black people than racism in the last 10 years."

Inside psych-pop

the mind of a shaman

Tame Impala's Kevin Parker used to be a Lonerist but new album 'Currents' finds him embracing the dancefloor and the ludicrousness of rock stardom. John Calvert provides the psych-analysis

"Psychedelia is not a genre. It has nothing to with guitar or synths. Psychedelia is a sensation" Kevin Parker

"I think five years ago," says Kevin Parker, the man who to all intents and purposes *is* Tame Impala, "the thought of sitting in a room being dissected by journalists would have horrified me."

In the cool, palatial backrooms of St Pancras' Renaissance Hotel, where outside the international concourse of a hot and impatient London rages perpetually, Parker is contemplating the media circus that has become his life since 2012's 'Lonerism', the psychedelic opus that many consider to be the best guitar album of the decade so far. Five interviews down, five to go, the Aussie hasn't long before he departs for Glastonbury where he is due onstage with Mark Ronson. Then it's back home to Perth where, undoubtedly, the Impala-bonkers Aussie press will hit him with their worst. "Right now, I'm trying not to look more than two hours into the future," confesses Parker, "or it'll do my head in."

Parker says he loves Glastonbury ("the most insane place on Earth") but, as expected, he's more comfortable in the crowd than backstage with the glitterati. His trek around the site with Tame Impala bandmate Jay Watson after they played in 2013 was fittingly psychedelic: they got lost and ended up at 6am in the festival's pleasure-apocalypse Shangri La. "We were like, 'What the fuck is this neon strip in the middle of this mud city?' We were so fucked that I can't remember whether we took drugs that night, but it felt like it."

The occasion for today's junket, however, is not Glastonbury but 'Lonerism''s feverishly anticipated follow-up. 'Currents' illuminates Parker's personal transformation from introvert to open-armed musical voyager and reluctant rock star. To tell such a story, 'Lonerism''s clouded, psychedelic sound – so keenly evocative of the interior life – no longer felt like the appropriate vehicle. On 'Currents', Parker has exchanged woozy guitar-driven rock for a celebratory, unabashedly ostentatious and effortless pop sound.

"It's about chaos – the whirlwinds of life that have always seemed too intense for you," he explains. "You put your fingers in your ears and you close your eyes to shut them out, because you've always tried to control who you are, control the world that you're in, but it comes to a point when it takes more energy to block it out than allow it to wash through you."

And so Parker learned to serenely accept his lot. Early last year, his life changed dramatically as his two-year stint in Paris came to an abrupt end. His relationship with Melody Prochet (of Melody's Echo Chamber) faltered and when his visa expired he decided to return home to Perth. Understandably, Parker has mixed feelings about Paris. "I felt more closed off than ever in that city, more detached from the rest of the world than in Perth, which is the most isolated city in the world," he says.

The temptation is to interpret 'Currents'' candid story of self-realisation as a friendly address to his ex-girlfriend – a conciliatory, atoning missive to let her know he's a changed man. The truth, however, is more complicated. "It could seem like I'm talking to a partner or a friend," concedes Kevin. "But it's really me talking to myself, another part of myself... to my old self, the part of me that resists change and wants to stay as I am."

The mellow Australian has decided that baring his soul on record is a way for him to feel a little less alone in the world, to confirm that his audience experience the same bad thoughts he'd always assumed were his alone. "It's extremely fulfilling to show a bit of yourself and see that others feel the same way," he says. "It inspires you to break off more and more." With 'Lonerism''s obfuscating cloak of fuzz now jettisoned, the boldly naked, brightly produced pop sound of 'Currents' shows the world more of Kevin Parker than he ever allowed before.

'Currents' also satisfies that most important requirement of all good pop music: unlike previous Tame Impala albums, it's danceable. Playing the role of DJ or producer, as opposed to rock star, appeals to the naturally shy Parker. "Dance music is completely different to the rock world, where there is someone onstage that everyone's watching – this icon that's being worshipped. Everyone's facing a different direction and doing their own thing. There's no one central person to worship, other than the DJ who's more just administering the music for the people."

This notion of musician as facilitator – "feeding the atmosphere," as he puts it – speaks to the hippy egalitarian in Parker, who, regardless of his solitary approach to making records, insists he has "always loved the idea of music as being a communal experience". Parker has always been a particularly reluctant frontman, but he says that the bigger his crowds have become, the easier it's been to get away with fading into the background and letting the music take over. "At high school, I always preferred being in the band playing at the house party – not the star of the show, but one of the people contributing to the atmosphere from behind the curtain."

When asked if he thinks Tame Impala might lose some followers in this migration from psychedelia to pop, Parker says he feels like he'd already abandoned psychedelia on his last album. Er, come again? Helmed by renowned

Solitude isn't bliss

For a noted introvert, Kevin Parker isn't shy of a good collaboration

Mark Ronson

Parker co-wrote and featured on two songs from Ronson's recent hit album, 'Uptown Special'. "It was one of the most smooth and inspiring collaborations I've ever done," he says. "I'm not the kind of person built to collaborate, but [Ronson's] a genius with working with people, bringing people together."

Melody's Echo Chamber

In 2012, Parker helped to write and produce and album of Parisian dream-pop with his then girlfriend, Melody Prochet. The duo made beautiful music together, but the end of their relationship appears to have signalled the end of their collaboration: the second Melody's Echo Chamber LP will be a self-produced effort.

ANDY FORD, MATT SAV

psych producer Dave Fridmann (Mercury Rev, The Flaming Lips), 'Lonerism' made heavy use of nearly all of psych's quintessential signifiers, from excessive reverb to vocal distortion. Not only that, but many elder statesmen of psych have since gone on record to declare the album a genre classic. So you'd be forgiven for your incredulity. But Parker is sticking to his guns. "Psychedelia is not 'these instruments plus these instruments plus these scales equals psychedelia', nor is it a genre," he insists. "It has nothing to with guitar or synths. Psychedelia is a sensation. It's when you transport people; where you feel like you're outside your own skin. 'Lonerism' did not induce that sensation. I never saw it as transportive."

By that logic, does that mean 'Currents' is actually more psychedelic than 'Lonerism'? "Sure, yeah. I mean I think of Aphex Twin as more psychedelic than, say, Cream, so..."

Released in 2010, Tame Impala's debut 'Innerspeaker' was the biggest indie album to hit Australia in years. The album quickly went gold, inspiring a nationwide psychedelic awakening largely without precedent in the land Down Under (although the latest Amorphous Androgynous compilation, 'A Monstrous Psychedelic Bubble (Exploding In Your Mind) – The Wizards Of Oz', does a fine job of locating some long-lost Aussie psych gems from the past). If 'Currents' risks alienating the rock set, did Parker have a difficult task persuading his mates on the Perth psych scene of his new mainstream-orientated direction?

"My friends are the ones changing with me, especially the ones involved in Tame Impala," Parker asserts. "We're experiencing the world in a different way together – realising that we shouldn't feel guilty for liking types of music that we used to take the piss out of before."

Rather than feeling like he's 'selling out', once Parker had come to terms with what he saw as the "moral" ramifications of going pop, it opened him up to a whole new world of musical possibilities. "I used to shut out the [pop music] side of things because I considered my identity to be more understated, but I realise now that that side of things can also bring out good art. Really, before now, I was boxing myself in."

'Currents' is more diverse than any Tame Impala album before it, with disco rock ('Let It Happen'), new-romantic balladry ('Eventually'), yacht rock ('Past Life') and bassy dance-pop ('The Less I Know The Better') among the many genres mastered. It's clearly the work of a brazenly adventurous musician, but as he is the first to remind us, Kevin Parker, The Human Being is a work in progress: "I still fluctuate between the side of me that wants to go out and stay awake forever and the side of me that never wants to leave my house again and become a Dracula-type figure."

For the majority of 'Currents', Kevin's stay-awake-forever side seems to be winning out. On the falsetto boudoir-soul of "Cause I'm A Man', Parker seems to relish playing the part of a virile, vainglorious pop star, that troublesome inner voice of his silenced in the pursuit of hedonistic all-surface entertainment music. It seems that in your wildest pop dreams you can be anyone you want to be. "There are always different parts of you can choose to let shine," he says. "Now I feel open to trying new things in music that I otherwise would have shut out because they were taboo."

Yet the album's final two tracks betray hints of self-doubt. Firstly, 'Love/Paranoia' is a kind of 'Jealous Guy' lament with Parker wrestling either with current relationship hang-ups or old Parisian wounds. And to finish, there's the self-explanatory 'New Person, Same Old Mistakes'. "The last song is meant to sound like the final battle between optimism and pessimism," Parker says, "a confrontation between the side of you that wants to progress and the side of you that wants to stay the same."

Regarding that battle, Parker says that, for now, he's simply intent on getting the best out of life – and that could mean leaving the Perth scene behind for good. "I can see myself moving again, just for the hell of it," he says. London, where Parker will spend the days after Glastonbury chilling with his current girlfriend, is one option. "I love this city. The vibe is palpable. You can just juice it for all it's worth."

As Kevin's next interviewer hovers outside, there's just time to ask when this constant scrutiny gets too much for Parker? He seems pretty Zen right now, but when does the Dracula sign go up? "Usually it's during an awkward social when I'm feeling like I have no presence as a person. As a 'personality' you're expected to have confidence in yourself, but sometimes I'll be hanging around people that I wanna make a good impression on and I'm just coming across as awkward."

Seemingly, it's not so much what's expected of a pop star onstage that troubles Parker as what's expected offstage. Parker may have mastered his relationship with music, but as for his relationship with himself... to be continued. ■

AAA Aardvark Getdown Services

A harbinger of 'Currents"s gleaming pop direction, this brilliantly named disco side-project is a collaboration between Parker and Tame Impala members Jay Watson and Cam Avery. "Kevin's been writing all these Michael Jackson mega-hits that he wouldn't use for Tame because he'd be too sheepish," Watson told The West Australian, "but I'm trying to convince him to, because they're all next-level 'Thriller' pop.

Pond

Tame Impala's sister band, these Perth psychonauts provide an outlet for the wiggier songwriting of past and present Tame members Nick Allbrook and Jay Watson. Parker originally played drums for Pond and has produced most of their records, including this year's 'Man, It Feels Like Space Again'.

DIVORCED
FATHERS
and SONS
ALL STARS

"I'M NOT HELLBENT ON TRYING TO CHANGE THE WORLD"

The Killers' Ronnie Vannucci Jr is living the dream. As Eve Barlow discovers, it's a dream involving cross-dressing, strong margaritas and making good-time rock'n'roll with his other band Big Talk

PHOTOS: CATHERINE ASANOV

"Get in here!" Ronnie Vannucci Jr is shouting through the blacked-out window of a Ford pick-up truck, the sort of vehicle reserved for serial killers and rock gods. Ronnie's picking me up from Sonoma County Airport in northern California. This is sophisticated wine country, but as the airport is named after cartoonist Charles M Schulz, it's also decorated with life-size Snoopy figurines. The contrast suits The Killers' drummer well. You can't miss him around the rural town he calls home and likens to Hill Valley, the fictional setting of *Back To The Future*. His monstrous vehicle has the words 'POWER STROKE' emblazoned on the side, and blue headlights. "Laser beams!" he jests.

As he revs through serene vineyards while listening to classic rock band Styx and Led Zeppelin's 'Bron-Y-Aur Stomp', sipping on a jasmine green tea and wearing a psychedelic Hunter S Thompson cabana shirt, Ronnie is well aware of his own rocker ridiculousness. "I find myself in this superficial universe now that parallels with my own weird everyday life," he says. "A Venn diagram of make-believe rock'n'roll balanced out with having an actual existence in smalltown USA."

He knows everyone around this town, but has never courted fame. He says The Killers quit doing red carpets with 'Sam's Town' in 2006. The only sign of his involvement in one of the world's biggest rock bands to be found in his house – formerly a women-only retirement home – is a framed number '2' from the ↠

"I LOVE MY DICK. BUT I MAKE A

RONNIE VANNUCCI JR

video set of early hit 'All These Things That I've Done'. "It doesn't fit with my personality to have gold discs up everywhere saying, 'Oh, I'm so great!' What would that lead to? Me wearing a fucking cape indoors?"

Aside from one recent Killers gig in Delaware, Ronnie has set aside his sticks for a while and is back on guitar/vocal duties. His side-project Big Talk is what he does when Brandon Flowers wants to go off and make a solo record, which is why every Brandon album is rapidly followed by a Big Talk one. The band is Ronnie's big, silly outlet for the element of his personality that constantly wants to turn it up to 11. "I've made a band with three members of Tenacious D as the entire rhythm section, and me and my friend Taylor [Milne] have turned ourselves into Jack [Black] and Kyle [Gass]." He's actually called the forthcoming second album 'Straight In, No Kissin''. Really. Soundwise, it's inspired by The Replacements and whatever other punk juices flowed out of his system during live takes in his basement studio at 3am, aided by wine and whiskey. It opens with the lyrics, "*Vannucci better hold that line*". "Who opens an album with their own name? What an asshole!"

Last time we spoke he said Big Talk's self-titled first album was "horseshit". "Did I say that?" he asks, high-pitched, pulling into his drive. "I retract that. Change that to 'half horseshit'." Ronnie is self-deprecating about his role as a singer/guitarist, despite having over three dozen guitars in his basement. "I know, he's the worst," chips in John Spiker from the back seat. John is Big Talk's bassist; Ronnie met him a year ago, then invited him to live in his house.

"If you see my dad by the pool naked, please ignore him," says Ronnie. "We had a pizza party here last night. It got out of hand." Around the kitchen table, Ronnie's wife of 20 years makes granola while his mum and dad play with Archie, the dog. We go downstairs to the "dojo"/studio adorned with "everything you need to make a record", including the brand of rye favoured by Al Capone. Ronnie pours out three neat ones. It is noon, after all, and we've already enjoyed his own pear cider, bottled and sold at a local barn. A wine tasting session replaces afternoon tea and there's a promise of a margarita for dinner. "You're gonna shit your pants, it's so good," he smiles. "The plan is to take you back to the airport in a wheelchair."

Your new album's opening track, 'Hold That Line', is about being the good guy of rock. What do you want to teach others?

Ronnie: "First of all, me being a good guy? That is subjective. It's about not letting your own bar go too low. I'm not hellbent on trying to change the world."

You sound pretty political on the song 'La Rue D'Awakening'...

"Well, I'd buy a newspaper every day and base songs on whatever was on the first three pages. There was a lot of shit going on. It made me angry. I love people. But I can't believe how stupid they are. The psychology of Man baffles me."

What's been upsetting you specifically?

"People shooting people! Schools should teach more science. People should be kinder. I'm not all hung up on peace though."

What do you make of the legalisation of gay marriage?

"I'm stoked. Of course! But there are assholes refuting it. People need to put down the phone and pick up a book. Five minutes per day and you'd be surprised how much you learn."

So what are you reading at the moment?

"Says the guy who's bitching... Well, I just finished *Zealot* [by Reza Aslan], a historical take on this guy Jesus Christ. Theology fascinates me. People like to burn other people in cages because of gods. Wow! We really haven't come a long way. I like audiobooks. People think when I'm onstage with The Killers, my in-ear monitors are playing back my drums. No. I'm listening to Stephen King. And Stephen Haw-*king*. Just getting my learn on."

Ever been tempted to go into TV or film?

"I already tried out for movies. Obviously I didn't get them. Whether you get the part has a lot to do with how you look."

What was wrong with your appearance?

"That's what I've been asking myself!"

Did they want you to get rid of your beard? Would that be a deal-breaker?

"Oh no! Tell me to shave it and I'll go upstairs right now. My skin gets sensitive, OK? I actually was asked to do some cheesy shit."

A Ryan Reynolds-style romcom?

"I wish! I was invited to play a vampire drummer that fucked everything that moved."

You turned that down?

"Well that's not really acting, is it? That's just my life."

Ronnie gets his sense of humour from his dad. "I have a zeal for happiness. I like to live by the seat of my pants." I ask when the last time was that he took a joke too far. "We just approved the album art..." Ronnie takes out his phone and shows off a psychedelic illustration of the five members of Big Talk, all scantily clad in drag. His illustrator friend had haphazardly drawn each member a self-portrait, accompanied by the female version of

REX

Big Talk (l-r): John Konesky, John Spiker, Ronnie Vannucci Jr, Brooks Wackerman, Taylor Milne

DAMN PRETTY GIRL"

themselves. It wasn't intended for the album, but in true Ronnie style, circumstances dictated otherwise.

"Weeks later, Bruce Jenner changes himself to Caitlyn Jenner on the cover of *Vanity Fair* and I'm like, 'What a great idea! We should do these female versions of ourselves for our cover!' All I asked for was big tits and a sunburn. Make me cute." It looks like Ronnie might be sporting a thong. "Is that a thong? It's more of an eye patch, showing a lot of cheek." Do you enjoy being in touch with your feminine side? "I love my dick. But I make a damn pretty girl." Ronnie pauses. It's a text from Brandon. "I just texted him the cover! He's replied from Hawaii, 'Dude, that's soooooo cool. I'm a little jelly.' Haha! I made Brandon jelly."

Do you and Brandon talk often?
"There's a mutual admiration going on. Well, at least I admire him!"
So you're a fan of 'The Desired Effect'?
"Yeah! It took me a minute to settle into the production but I don't have a bad thing to say."
Do you wish Brandon would save all his best songs for The Killers?
"Sure. Some ideas on my album were supposed to be on [fourth Killers LP] 'Battle Born' too but whatever. 'The Desired Effect' was brought in as demos but they just didn't fly with the rest of the guys."
Are you and Brandon the driving force behind The Killers?
"We're all kindreds on some levels. Just because we're the ones doing albums outside The Killers doesn't denote that we're the driving forces. Dave [Keuning, guitarist] and Mark [Stoermer, bassist] have a driving force. If they didn't we'd just form another band."
Do tempers flare?
"Of course! [Ronnie roleplays a little scenario by standing up and screaming] 'Come on! This is the best fucking job in the world! What are you doing sitting on your ass? Get the fuck up! Let's rule!'"
How do Mark and Dave react?
"They tell me to chill the fuck out. You have to respect everyone. I don't want to create a travelling shitshow."
Have you ever thrown a cymbal across the room?
"Hahaha. No. I let it stew inside and wreck my brains instead. There hasn't been any broken skin. Just bruised instruments."
Brandon fluctuates between telling the press that The Killers are the greatest band in the world and that they're not good enough. Which is it?
"It's not that the band isn't good enough. We've done a lot, but we haven't done it yet. We haven't done anything important."
Do you still feel like a young band?
"For the type of band we wanna be, yes."
What's it like when you come together in a room again?
"I just wanna hug the dudes, 'Hey! It's been too fucking long! Get your bass on!'"
What do your and Brandon's solo albums mean for the future of The Killers?
"We're going to make another record. I'd like them to come here because I'm lazy and have a perfectly suited studio. The idea has been tossed around. Look, I gotta piss like a horse. You feel like doing some tasting?"

Over some commendably

fine wines and that promised margarita, Ronnie wants to get one final thing off his chest. It's the week after Glastonbury, and he was particularly perturbed to see Kanye West declaring himself the greatest living "rock star" on the planet. "I watched him perform 'Bohemian Rhapsody', saw a frog fall from the sky and decided it was time to prepare for the end of the world." Ronnie doesn't think Kanye is a "rock star". "My neighbour has a six-year-old in Little League and according to him he's 'a little rock star'. So maybe Kanye is a rock star in the same way as a six-year-old T-ball player." The Ronnie Vannucci Jr definition of a 'rock star' is someone who "fills a stadium night after night anywhere in the world, writes their own songs, falls off that stage, breaks his leg and then plays two-and-a-half hours afterwards." So he doesn't think it was foolhardy of Dave Grohl to play on a broken leg?

"No! It happens all the time. I tell you, it's a good thing I sit down on my instrument..."

Ronnie recognises that his idea of rock'n'roll may seem "antiquated" to others. "I don't like pissing contests. The Killers are a band born in my fucking garage in Vegas who played eight hours a day, wrote songs and went out to do gigs on the weekend."

Despite living the good life in Sonoma, Ronnie is unlikely to forget where he came from. Too drunk to drive, he asks his mum to take us back to the airport. Jumping in the car, a notification flashes up on the dashboard: "The Killers are playing on Channel 10". "Yeah, mom has alarms set for that," he laughs. ■

"A NEW FOOT SPA EVERY NIGHT!"

Big Talk bassist and producer John Spiker on what it's like being in a band with America's Number One joker

What were your first impressions of Ronnie?
John: "The first rehearsal, Ronnie poured everyone a Scotch. It was really aggressive Scotch. I wasn't part of the whiskey team yet so it was a rite of passage."

Do you think Ronnie has more fun with Big Talk than he does with The Killers?
"The Killers are a huge juggernaut of a corporation. Big Talk are this fun, lean, mean little machine. But The Killers are so respectful of each other. There's no universe where Big Talk gets big and The Killers are abandoned."

What are the fondest memories you have of making 'Straight In No Kissin'"?
"When we were over in Vegas at the beginning we'd get foot spas every night after sessions. There are 10-foot spas on every block, all 24 hours. We'd try a new foot spa every night at 3am."

So you had really clean feet making this album?
"Actually we left feeling dirtier. These aren't your Napa Valley high-class foot spas. I think we were the first feet they'd touched in months."

Reviews

Albert Hammond Jr
Momentary Masters

The badass Strokes guitarist finds himself in a confessional mood on his latest and most accomplished solo album

For those who saw The Strokes as a kind of exquisitely realised indie-rock boyband, Albert Hammond Jr. was the badass: the one who knew a hundred ways to open a bottle of beer, none of which involved a bottle opener; who knew how to match a suit to a skinny tie; the kind of guy who'd light a cigarette just to let it burn like an incense stick in the neck of his guitar.

The 35-year-old's music, however, has always revealed a more thoughtful, sensitive soul. Hammond's third solo album takes its title from Carl Sagan's *Pale Blue Dot*, a book about mankind's place in the universe and our potential to transcend it, while thematically, he's been talking up the influence of the confessional poet Anne Sexton on his lyric writing. His previous albums, 2006's 'Yours To Keep' and 2008's '¿Cómo Te Llama?' have shown a knack for sweet, lovingly crafted, mid-fi pop songs, some of which are good enough to make you wonder if the next Strokes album could be that long-awaited rival to 'Is This It'. Realistically, The Strokes seem to be moving further away from what Hammond does, and that's a shame, because on this evidence, he's getting better and better at it.

'Momentary Masters' is his most satisfying, cohesive record yet, and, in many ways, his most personal. He's described lead single 'Born Slippy' – bright and ebullient on the outside, but with undercurrents of self-doubt – as a song about what happens "when what has defined you for a long time isn't there any more," and given his well-publicised problems with drugs and the always ambiguous nature of his day job, there are any number of ways you can interpret a line like, "*Every time you stop, I begin*". Elsewhere, the slower, synth-

textured 'Coming To Getcha' is styled as a conversation between Hammond and the late friend the album is dedicated to a conversation which only seems to make sense in snatches ("*She never made it back, she's stuck in transit*") but which is clearly loaded with meaning.

The lyrical focus on dualities and alter-egos is only one level on which 'Momentary Masters' can be enjoyed: the twitchy garage-rock strut of 'Caught By My Shadow' or 'Losing Touch' work just as well as smart, self-contained pop songs. Yet for all Hammond's gifts as a writer, he's never been blessed with a particularly distinctive voice, and there's a slightly generic American indie timbre to the delivery of tracks like 'Touché', or the bizarrely titled 'Side Boob' (see box, left), which means they take a few listens to really connect. Plonked incongruously in the middle, however, is a spruced-up bedroom demo of Bob Dylan's 'Don't Think Twice, It's All Right', on which he charmingly sticks to the original's folksy patois and which ends up being one of its most characterful and affecting moments.

Hammond is still growing into this solo artist thing, and it's easy to forget that it's been seven years since his last release, recorded at a time when he was spending thousands of dollars a week on cocaine and heroin. In some respects, 'Momentary Masters' is the work of a different person: older and wiser, but still receptive to wonder and capable of naivety. It seems pointless to speculate on how – or if – Hammond's growth as a songwriter will impact on The Strokes, but for the man himself, this album registers as a significant achievement. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

7

ALBERT HAMMOND JR ON...

...producer Gus Oberg
"Gus is like an extension of myself when it comes to writing and recording. On this one, he really pushed me. It was only afterwards when I said to him, 'Jeez man, you were so tough!' that he told me, 'Yeah, because I was trying to get you to go to different places.' I was glad – for a while, it felt like he just hated me!"

...recording at home
"I did it all at my place upstate. I don't know if it's true that where you are affects how a record sounds, but because I was at home, I did feel as though I was able to be more creative with it."

...calling a song 'Side Boob'
"The idea is that if something feels 'light' to you, you visually represent it with something darker. The song just felt like it had a meaning that... seemed appropriate with the image of side boob, I guess! Everyone likes side boob, right? Even girls like side boob. It's not like I called the song 'Tits'!"

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** July 31 ▶**LABEL** Vagrant ▶**LENGTH** 35:43 ▶**PRODUCER** Gus Oberg ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Born Slippy ▶2. Power Hungry ▶3. Caught By My Shadow ▶4. Coming To Getcha ▶5. Losing Touch ▶6. Don't Think Twice ▶7. Razors Edge ▶8. Touché ▶9. Drunched In Crumbs ▶10. Side Boob ▶**BEST TRACK** Losing Touch

MORE ALBUMS

Neil Young
The Monsanto Years
Reprise

Coming 30 years after he founded concert series Farm Aid, and named after an agrochemical corporation known for producing genetically modified seeds, 'The Monsanto Years' is Neil Young's eco-warrior battle cry. The follow-up to 2014's 'Storytone' was recorded by a band featuring Willie Nelson's sons Lukas and Micah, and 'A New Day For Love' starts things in rolling, rousing fashion. "*It's a bad day to do nothing/With so many people needing our help*" he calls, setting an angry yet deeply melodic tone. There's delicate 'Harvest Moon'-style balladry on 'Wolf Moon', hillbilly swagger on 'A Rock Star Bucks A Coffee Shop' and trademark country harmonies on the vitriolic " 'Monsanto Years'. The sound of a legend raging in style. ■ LEONIE COOPER

8

Ducktails
St Catherine Domino

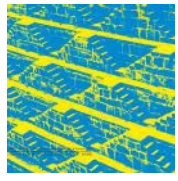
Over four albums with his Ducktails solo project, Real Estate's Matthew Mondanile has gone from the muddy lo-fi of 2009's self-titled debut to the polished indie-pop of 2013's 'The Flower Lane'. Fifth album 'St Catherine' ups the gloss even further: 'Headbanging In The Mirror' comes on like a lost '80s Prefab Sprout pop song and the title track's dreamy melody is in line with Real Estate's best. Elsewhere though, the record lacks substance. The guitars on 'Heaven's Room' shimmer but fail to leave a lasting impression, and 'Medieval' is pleasing but forgettable. 'St Catherine"s surface may be polished to perfection, but much of what's underneath feels hollow. ■ LISA WRIGHT

6

Four Tet
Morning/Evening

Kieran Hebden delivers a masterclass in hypnotic, emotional electronica over two 20-minute tracks

Since his 1999 debut 'Dialogue', Kieran Hebden has turned his hand to all manner of electronic noise, from the jazz of 2007's 'Tongues' to garagey pirate-radio rave (2013's 'Beautiful Rewind', his seventh album as Four Tet). 'Morning/Evening', his self-released eighth album, comprises two 20-minute tracks. Hypnotic opener 'Morning Side' is one of the most moving pieces of music Hebden has ever put his name to, weaving a heartbreaking sample of Indian singer Lata Mangeshkar into metronomic techno drums and subtle blips. 'Evening Side' is dreamier: humming bass and drip-drop synth tones slowly envelop an angelic vocal sample then drop away, before drums loom ominously. You could compare 'Morning/Evening' to Burial (who Hebden has previously worked with, notably on 2009 12-inch 'Moth')



or The Orb for its mastery of slowly unfolding mood, but that's only a fraction of the story. Eccentric spirit, production mastery and emotional heft put this alongside Four Tet's very best work. ■ BEN CARDEW

8

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** Out now ▶**LABEL** Text ▶**PRODUCER** Kieran Hebden ▶**LENGTH** 40:00 ▶**TRACKLISITNG** ▶1. Morning Side ▶2. Evening Side ▶**BEST TRACK** Morning Side

Hyde & Beast
Hard Times Good Times EP Tail Feather/Caroline International

With The Futureheads quiet since 2012's a cappella album 'Rant', drummer Dave Hyde continues his '70s revival with Hyde & Beast. The duo's new EP follows the glam-tinged shuffle of last year's second album 'Keep Moving'. The title-track sounds like Tame Impala locking horns with T-Rex beneath a brass section, while the barn-dance melody of 'Never Get To Heaven' bears a not unpleasant resemblance to The Stereophonics' 'Pick A Part That's New' and glittery closer 'Get Up' struts into the territory of glam-rockers Mud. An exhilarating experiment in nostalgia, *Top Of The Pops 2* style. ■ ROBERT COOKE

7

Evvol
Eternalism
!K7

Dubliner Julie Chance, Sydney native Jon Dark and French drummer Valentin Plessy have been creating darkwave electropop since 2010, previously as Kool Thing and, since the beginning of this year, as Evvol. Under that moniker comes the refreshing sound of 'Eternalism'. 'I See You (I Am You)' begins with Krautrock melodies before erupting into a dubby post-punk blur, 'Starcrossed' is pure '80s synthpop, while 'Your Love' and 'No Love' are dark, sultry numbers combining disco with processed vocals that merge into beats. Best of all is 'Four Steps From Home' a straight-up house classic with Dark's vocals urging you to *"Run, run to the desert"*.

8

■ HUW NESBITT

Strange Wilds
Subjective Concepts
Sub Pop

Pronoia is the opposite of paranoia – essentially the happy delusion that there is a conspiracy that exists to help people. It's also the name of the hellish four-minute blast of noise that's the best song on this debut album by Seattle trio Strange Wilds. The follow-up to 2014's four-track 'Wet' EP, 'Subjective Concepts' sounds like it was raised on 'Bleach'-era Nirvana and aligns the band with their Washington peers Milk Music and Naomi Punk. They build a monumental wall of hardcore noise on 'Egophillia', before taking a wrecking ball to it and screaming into the mess. Elsewhere, there are tight grooves on 'Disdain' and 'Terrible', and guttural riffs on 'Starved For' that offer plenty for bleeding gums to gnaw on.

7

■ DAVID RENSHAW

Field Music
Music For Drifters

Sunderland mavericks return – with the soundtrack to a 1929 documentary, obviously

In the three years since Sunderland-based Field Music's last album, 'Plumb', David Brewis has had a solo album as School Of Language, brother Peter's made a record with Maxïmo Park singer Paul Smith, and both have ongoing parts in their old bassist Ian Black's prog-punk project SLUG. As they've zig-zagged between jobs, it's seemed like their main band has been a way off the Brewis brothers' radar.

Yet here they are, sneaking out another Field Music album – albeit a specially commissioned instrumental one – that places their unique brand of realist art-pop in a whole new context. The pair were asked by Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival in 2013 to compose a new score for influential documentary maker John Grierson's 1929 film *Drifters*. They obliged, bringing their former keyboard player Andrew Moore in to help write, perform, record and finally release (first for Record Store Day in April, now digitally) this neatly crafted 20-part composition.

Drifters follows a fleet of Shetland Islands fishermen as they battle the brutal North Sea. This score starts serenely enough, with trademark Brewis guitar lines slipping and sliding all over 'Introduction', but by 'Village', fiddly time signatures, sinister piano flourishes and clanging chord changes hint at tough times ahead for the seabound protagonists. The gently rocking percussion and carefree riffing of 'Casting Out Parts 2 & 3' are replaced by 'Destroyers Of The Deep"'s skeletal, agitated guitarwork, and the mechanical rhythms of 'Hauling' lock together like cogs before being prised apart by the Hammer horror intensity of 'The Storm Gathers'.

As an instrumental score, fans may miss the clever kitchen sink turns of phrase that have populated Field Music lyrics since 2005's self-titled debut, but 'Music For Drifters' breaks down the band's distinctive sound to its raw DNA. Odd rhythmic patterns somehow sound natural, unusual minimalist melodies feel instantly familiar – these feats of musicianship sit at the heart of every Brewis experiment but on 'Music For Drifters' they're the primary focus. It leaves Field Music with an enticingly blank canvas on which to paint the album they're already planning for 2016.

8

■ ROBERT COOKE

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** July 24 ▶**LABEL** Memphis Industries ▶**PRODUCER** Field Music ▶**LENGTH** 38:31 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Introduction ▶2. Village ▶3. Engine ▶4. Out Of The Harbour ▶5. Headland ▶6. The Log-Line Tells The Miles ▶7. Casting Out Part 1 ▶8. Down Below ▶9. Casting Out Parts 2 & 3 ▶10. Night-Time ▶11. Destroyers Of The Deep ▶12. Dawn Breaks. ▶13. Wake Up ▶14. Hauling ▶15. The Storm Gathers ▶16. Full Speed ▶17. Batten Down ▶18. The Ships Ride Through / Quayside Part 1 ▶19. Quayside Part 2 ▶20. Ends Of The Earth ▶**BEST TRACK** Village

Jodie Marie
Trouble In Mind Studiowz

Jodie Marie's 2012 debut album 'Mountain Echo' featured several songs co-written with Bernard Butler, which led to comparisons with fellow Welshwoman Duffy, who collaborated with the one-time Suede guitarist a few years earlier. This follow-up, co-produced by Noisettes guitarist Dan Smith, will provoke no such thing. Though the 24-year-old dabbles in horn-driven retro-pop on 'I Still Care, Pt I' and 'Only One I'm Thinking Of', her rich and robust voice shines brightest on bluesy pop tunes like 'Later Than You Think' and yearning country-soul ballads 'I Need Someone' and 'Everyone Makes Mistakes'. Some of these songs are a little too polite to burrow deep beneath your skin, but 'Trouble In Mind' is consistently accomplished stuff.

6

■ NICK LEVINE

The School
Wasting Away And Wondering Elefant

Following the release of 2012's swinging 'Reading Too Much Into Things Like Everything', The School's frontwoman Liz Hunt founded Wales Goes Pop! festival, and her eight-piece indie-pop collective are pretty much its house band. Third album 'Wasting Away And Wondering' tightens up the Cardiff group's '60s-indebted, horns-and-strings sound with rhythmic stompers like 'Do I Love You?' and The Supremes beat of 'Love Is Anywhere You Find It'. Hunt's lyrics lean towards the lovelorn humour of likeminded revivalists Camera Obscura and Belle And Sebastian (*"So you want to move to Amsterdam?/You never liked it there before"* sighs upbeat opener 'Every Day') but there's none of those bands' ironic distance, just pure pop.

7

■ STUART HUGGETT

Reviews

Creeping Pink
Mirror Woods Castle Face

Halfway through 'Mirror Woods', the title track and centrepiece of Creeping Pink's debut album, a pleasant synth melody morphs into a startling passage of white noise, distorted robot vocals and piano. It's a moment that makes it easy to identify what Thee Oh Sees frontman John Dwyer saw in this Los Angeles bedroom producer (real name Landon Caldwell). Signed to Dwyer's Castle Face label, Creeping Pink shares Thee Oh Sees' tendency to veer in unexpected directions, only at far slower pace. These 14 songs drone and drift into one another imperceptibly. It can get a bit too Ariel-Pink-on-downers, but the melodies on 'Come Into My World' and 'Sour Fruit' are indelible.

7

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

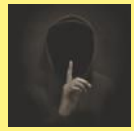
Holy Esque
Submission EP
Beyond The Frequency

Back in 2012, Holy Esque released a much-praised self-titled EP and toured with similarly hyped Manc noise-experimentalists Wu Lyf. Singer Pat Hynes' throaty growl is similar to ex-Wu Lyf singer Ellery Roberts', but this second EP aligns the Glasgow quartet's sound more closely with Scotland's current crop of post-punk bands. For all that's bold and rousing about 'Submission', there's an unshakable feeling of familiarity. The anthemic chorus of highlight 'Fade' recalls Frightened Rabbit at their most triumphant and synth flourishes add welcome colour. Elsewhere though, Hynes' vocals are uncomfortable and overwrought. Here's hoping they explore less dreary territory on their upcoming debut. ■

5

LUKE MORGAN BRITTON

Mr Jones
Sounds For The Mute
The Public Stand



Jonas Uittenbosch, a Dutch creator of panel-beating widescreen techno, is something of a late bloomer. Now in his mid-30s, he only decided to pursue music seriously five years ago, and his chosen production moniker is deeply forgettable. The patronage of surly British techno don Dave Clarke gave Mr. Jones a healthy boost, though, and 'Sounds For The Mute' upholds the thumping no-bullshit style Clarke established in the '90s with his three-EP 'Red' series. Uittenbosch occasionally prioritises headphoned home-listeners over sweaty ravers ('Forced By Low Frequencies'), but this album is epitomised by 'The Truth About Robots': 10 minutes of galloping vocoder-voiced techno with mental acidic synth bits.

7

■ NOEL GARDNER

Rat Columns
Fooling Around EP
Blackest Ever Black

This new EP from David West's Rat Columns project features a trippy, seven-minute version of 'Fooling Around' from last year's debut album 'Leaf', but the three songs on the B-side show off the Perth experimentalist's abilities best. It starts with opener 'Waiting In The New World' jangling like now-defunct LA duo Girls. Things get murkier on 'Strays', whose dribbling guitars and repetitive basslines will attract DIIV fans. Closer 'Should I Leave You Alone?' unsettles most, as West ratchets up synth, guitar and bass to make a song as fierce as those on his old band Total Control's 2014 record 'Typical System'. Like that album, 'Fooling Around' is a thrilling document of modern Australian punk.

8

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

Julio Bashmore
Knockin' Boots

Disclosure-endorsed, Bristol dance polymath showcases his talent on this hugely enjoyable and brashly eclectic debut

Signed to London dance label PMR – who released the chart-topping breakout album 'Settle' by his friends and frequent touring buddies Disclosure in 2013 – Matt Walker has spent the last few years cultivating a reputation for making club bangers as Julio Bashmore. Coming up from Bristol's underground, the 25-year-old ignored the city's associations with bass and trip-hop to embrace the more accessible melodies of house. After a string of low-key releases came 2012 breakthrough 'Au Seve', a monster hit that consumed Ibiza for a whole summer and has amassed seven million YouTube plays. Walker also produced 'If You're Never Gonna Move' for London singer Jessie Ware's 2012 debut 'Devotion'. In UK dance circles, few currently carry more clout.

Two years later, we get 'Knockin' Boots'. It sounds like its gestation was characterised by determined crate-digging and nights that stretched on for eternity, given its eclecticism and woozily high spirits. The record is full of the hummable synths and ecstatic drops associated with house, but it can't really be contained by one genre. There are pulsating, stop-start rhythms ('She Ain't'), shuffling garage beats ('What's Mine Is Mine') and soulful melodies ('Holding On'). The title track and opener begins with a sample of Detroit R&B trio The Jones Girls crooning, "*We danced and danced until we fell in love*" taken from their 1980 single 'Dance Turned Into A Romance'. Its pounding trance beat and one-note synths are winningly kitsch, setting a warm and fuzzy tone that's enhanced by the use of live-recorded drums, bass and organs throughout the album.

Walker also enlists an array of up-and-coming singers: south London's J'Danna adds sass to the louche 'Simple Love' and Johannesburg rapper Okmalumkoolkat brings a rapid-fire flow to 'Umuntu,' which sounds like the best song '80s house producer Junior Vasquez never recorded. The most radio-friendly moment arrives with 'Let Me Be Your Weakness', which features vocals from London singer, funk producer and multi-instrumentalist Bixby and shows Walker can match Disclosure for poppiness. Colourful and unconventional throughout, 'Knockin' Boots' keeps Bashmore's reputation for bangers firmly intact. ■ JORDAN BASSETT

8

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** August 7 ▶**LABEL** Broadwalk Records ▶**PRODUCERS** Matt Walker ▶**LENGTH** 48.35 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Knockin' Boots ▶2. Holding On (feat. Sam Dew) ▶3. She Ain't (feat. Julie Mendoza) ▶4. Let Me Be Your Weakness (feat. Bixby) ▶5. Rhythm Of Auld (feat. J'Danna) ▶6. For Your Love (feat. Seven David Jr) ▶7. What's Mine Is Mine ▶8. Bark ▶9. Umuntu (feat. Okmalumkoolkat) ▶10. Simple Love (feat. J'Danna) ▶11. Kong (ft. Bixby) ▶12. You & Me ▶**BEST TRACK** Umuntu

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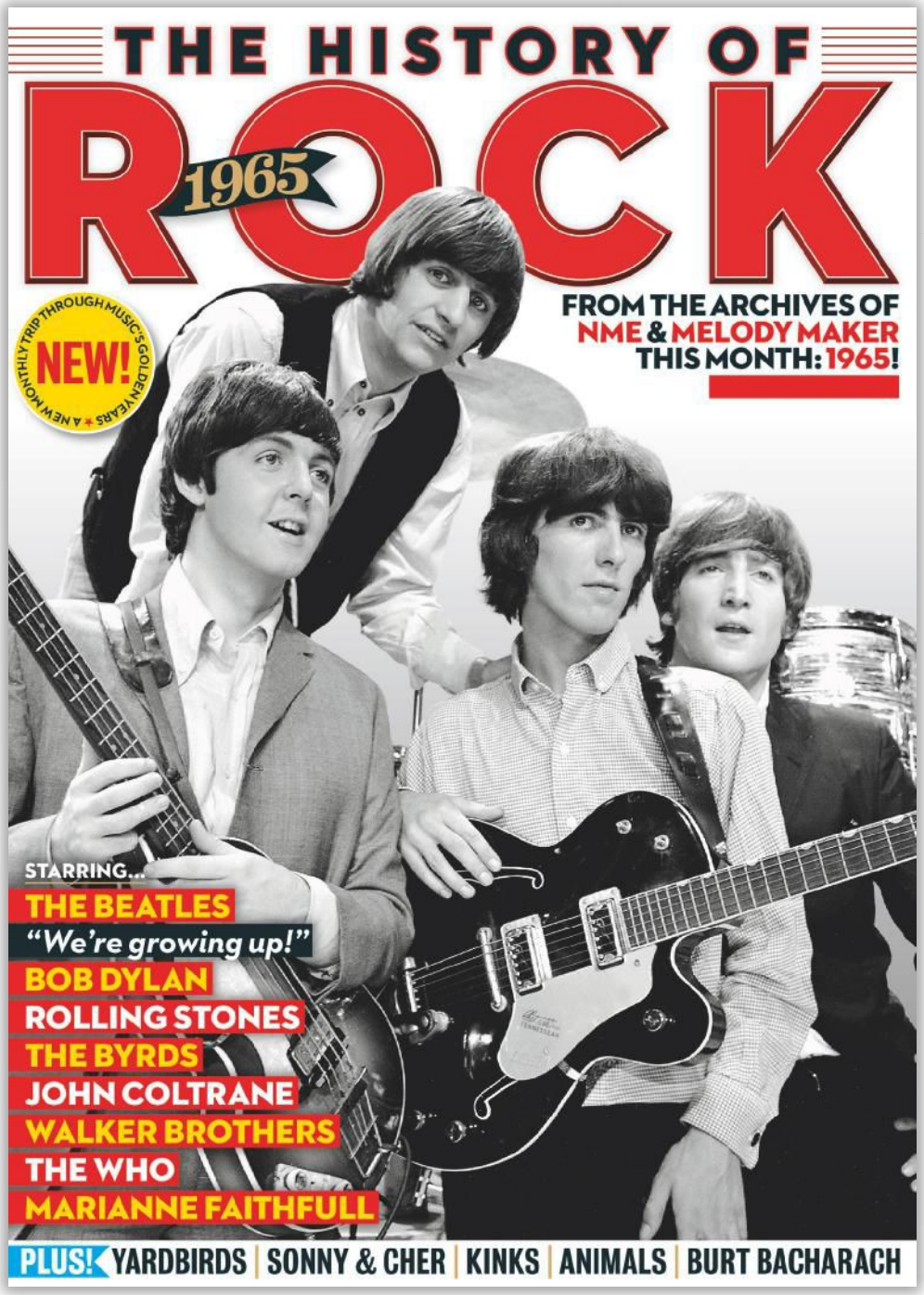

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FILM

Wilko Johnson (left) and Julien Temple

The Ecstasy Of Wilko Johnson

Julien Temple's film on the guitar legend is less music doc, more profound study of mortality

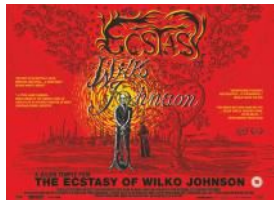
Wilko Johnson – best known as the guitarist and songwriter of the original and best line-up of Essex pub rock group Dr Feelgood – is a culturally significant musician. But this is not a film about his distinctive method of playing guitar (essentially playing rhythm and lead simultaneously) or about how Dr Feelgood were a precursor to punk (for that see 2009's *Oil City Confidential*, an excellent film also by Julien Temple).

Instead, it's a film about death or, more specifically, how to die, or, even more specifically, how wonderful it can be to die. In 2013, Wilko was diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer, but as the 68-year-old says at the beginning of this film, rather than feeling fear, or regret, or even much sadness, he felt elated – not because he wished to die, but because he suddenly became "vividly alive". He thought he might be in shock, but the elation only got stronger, forcing him to reconsider everything he once took for granted. In one scene, Temple follows him to Japan. There, Wilko sees snow refracted in sunlight so it turns gold. It's an extraordinary sight that he says he'd normally make a point of remembering, but what purpose does memory serve when you're doomed? You may as well experience life in the present, which isn't easy to do, as Wilko readily admits.

Wilko, who still lives in Canvey Island, Essex, where he grew up and Dr Feelgood formed, is a most learned and charismatic man. His contemplations on "oblivion" are inspiring and profound, and often very funny. In Japan, he played a couple of farewell gigs. At the last one, he said to the crowd, "Listen, I'm never going to see you again," and ends the show by performing, with some black humour, Chuck Berry's 'Bye Bye Johnny'. "That was a buzz, because it was just such a great piece of showbusiness," he says. "You know, 'Bye! Bye!' and everybody's crying and that – it's fantastic! Me, I didn't have a lump in my throat or anything."

Temple splices his interviews with Wilko with footage from different films (Richard Burton in *Hamlet*, Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*, Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Mirror*) offering Wilko's story context and added eccentricity. And while there is unavoidable overlap with *Oil City Confidential*, the joy of *The Ecstasy Of Wilko Johnson* is that it speaks of far more significant things than a usual biopic of a musician (the only other interviewee is Roger Daltrey, who Wilko recorded a hit album with in 2013, 'Going Back Home'). Wilko will be remembered as a great man, not just a great musician – when he does eventually die. And that's the twist here: the film's second half concerns his operation to have his watermelon-sized tumour successfully removed. Oblivion, for now, is at bay. ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

9



▶**DIRECTOR** Julien Temple
▶**IN CINEMAS** July 17

CINEMA

Best Of Enemies

During the Republican and Democratic party conventions of 1968, the TV network ABC hired the writers Gore Vidal, a liberal, and the conservative William F Buckley Jr to take part in 10 nightly debates. Each believed the other represented everything that would bring the country to its knees. What was intended as the intellectual equivalent of a heavyweight title fight descended into mutually humiliating abuse and lifelong rancour. Robert Gordon and Morgan Neville's patient, thorough documentary persuasively argues that the debates did the opposite of what their ratings success might have suggested: they played midwife to today's poisonous and polarised political discourse, where style matters more than substance. ■ ANGUS BATEY

8

CINEMA

13 Minutes

In 1939, carpenter Georg Elser tried to assassinate Adolf Hitler with a homemade bomb. But Hitler unexpectedly left the building 13 minutes before the device exploded. Oliver Hirschbiegel, the director of 2004's *Downfall*, a drama on the final days of Nazi rule, uses flashbacks to show how personal and political experiences pushed Elser (Christian Friedel, *Amour Fou*) towards violence. The rise of Nazism tends to be presented as if the entire German nation were ardent Hitler supporters or cowed victims. Through lingering shots of ordinary people ignoring, avoiding or tacitly condoning thuggery and abuse, Hirschbiegel emphasises the old adage that the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. ■ ANGUS BATEY

8

CINEMA

Ant-Man

Quick-shrinking superhero Ant-Man made his Marvel Comics debut in 1962, and this summer blockbuster marks his first cinema appearance. Paul Rudd stars as Scott Lang, a burglar persuaded by scientific genius Dr. Hank Pym (Michael Douglas) to wear a special suit that will make him insect-sized so he can break into Pym's former company and prevent his size-changing technology being sold to warmongers. Director Peyton Reed (*Bring It On*) mixes nifty visuals with moments of light relief supplied by Lang's wisecracking sidekick Luis (*Fury*'s Michael Peña) to make an entertaining and likeable popcorn flick. But thanks to an obvious backstory involving Lang's estranged daughter and a predictable romantic subplot linking him to Pym's daughter (*Lost*'s Evangeline Lilly), *Ant-Man* often feels formulaic too. ■ NICK LEVINE

6

ONLINE

The Redemption Of The Devil

Jesse 'The Devil' Hughes (who plays with Josh Homme in Eagles Of Death Metal) lives a contradictory life. An ordained minister and former drug addict, the moustachioed 42-year-old balances the grimier side of his life (naked photoshoots with his ex-pornstar wife Tuesday Cross) with presenting a Christian radio show. Filmed during 2014 by *Vice* magazine's Alex Hoffman, this documentary follows Hughes as he straddles the line between rock and religion. The most revealing scenes shed light on Hughes the family man. He tearily tries to arrange visits with a child he rarely sees, and in one moving scene he promises his son a drumkit, excitement visible in his eyes. Intimate and unexpectedly moving. ■ RHIAN DALY

9

47

Björk and orchestra onstage in Manchester

In typically colourful style, the Icelandic star plays songs from 'Vulcinara' for the first time in the UK

PHOTO: CARSTEN WINDHORST

Released in January, Björk's ninth album 'Vulnicura' is a stark account of the breakdown of her relationship with the artist Matthew Barney. So it seems fitting when she emerges from the side of the stage at this Manchester International Festival show reborn as a black butterfly, flitting past a 15-piece orchestra all dressed in white. Her voice quivers at the start of opener 'Stonemilker', betraying some nerves about the record's European premiere. After five songs from 'Vulnicura', pink and blue smoke canons explode into the sky before 1997 track 'Hunter', heralding a sequence of older songs including 'Bachelorette' and 'Possibly Maybe'. Between songs, the 49-year-old sips from a champagne glass and a mug of tea. Things intensify during encore 'Hyperballad' as fireworks go off, bathing the crowd in sparks. Björk might still be on the mend, but this performance suggests an artist ready to fly. ■ HAZEL SHEFFIELD

8

Björk

Castlefield Bowl, Manchester

Sunday, July 5

Calling Festival

Clapham Common, London
Saturday, July 4

Noel's first solo festival headline set caps a day of rowdiness in south London

They're a right rowdy bunch, the punters at Calling Festival. You could fill a swimming pool with the contents of the chucked pints cartwheeling towards the stages, even as **Modest Mouse** face down the mid-afternoon sun. In a jazzy flamingo-print shirt, singer Isaac Brock barks through his Portland, Oregon-based band's jerky indie-rock. "Guess what we were liberated of today?" he asks the audience at one point. "All of our musical equipment! So half the band won't be playing on half their songs."

Now a six-piece, Modest Mouse started life as a three-piece, so older material – such as 'Doin' The Cockroach' and 'Dramamine' – actually benefits from this stripped down approach. But cuts from latest album 'Strangers To Ourselves' suffer from the use of borrowed instruments and sound like they're crackling from a car stereo somewhere on Clapham High Street; a shame because the band can slay.

Meanwhile **Bleachers**, the side-project of Jack Antonoff, frontman of New York indie-poppers Fun, play a buoyant show on the Other Stage, running headfirst through the '80s influenced power-pop of new album 'Strange Desire' (plus a delirious cover of Fleetwood Mac's 'Go Your Own Way'). The vibes are good, and when Antonoff explains that he's spent July 4 – US Independence Day – in London for the last two years and "there's no fucking place I'd rather be", the crowd roars its approval.

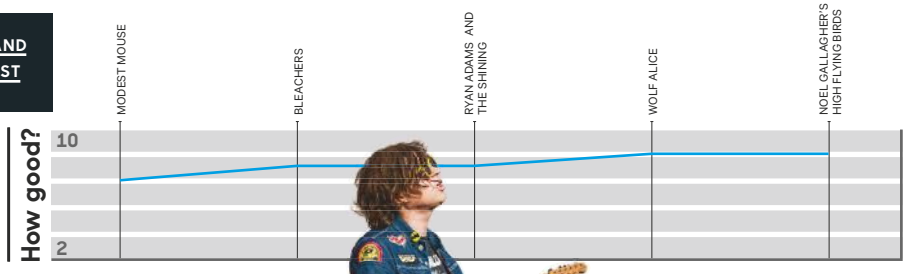
The yeehawing continues on the Main Stage, which **Ryan Adams And The Shining** fill with retro American iconography, including two vintage arcade games and an ancient Dr Pepper vending machine (there's also a US flag, just in case anyone missed the point). He and his five-piece band lean towards the alt.country end of the 40-year-old's sound with the pristine renditions of 'Peaceful Valley' and 'Come Pick Me Up'. There's no sign of his 'Wonderwall' cover, but would you dare with a Gallagher in the house?

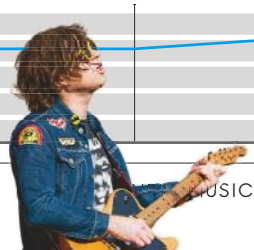
YOU COULD FILL A SWIMMING POOL WITH THE CONTENTS OF THE CHUCKED PINTS

Time, then, for the Brits take over, as north London four-piece **Wolf Alice** close the Other Stage with a set that showcases the raw grunge power of recent top-five debut 'My Love Is Cool'. The stop-starts of 'You're a Germ' are impeccable, as are singer Ellie Rowsell's ear-splitting shrieks on 'She'. After leaping about on the drum riser, bassist Theo Ellis introduces a grunged-up rendition of 'Bros' by purring: "This one's about having friends. I can see everyone here's friends. Sweet."

Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds cement this sentiment on the Main Stage.

BAND LIST





JENN FIVE, WUNMI ONIBUDO

Noel Gallagher and (inset) Wolf Alice's Ellie Rowsell

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD

Carlos Birch-Allson, 27, London
"There was a nice atmosphere at Noel Gallagher, it was great to hear everyone singing along."

Ross McLean, 33, Glasgow
"'Champagne Supernova' was really good. It really galvanised the crowd."

Ailidh Wilson, 23, Glasgow
"I really enjoyed Ryan Adams. It made me want to hear more of his unknown stuff."

Cathryn Bishop, 36, Kent
"I thought Wolf Alice were so good, they seem really different and I love the singer's voice."

Ryan Adams called Noel – who is making his first solo festival headline appearance – "the greatest fucking songwriter of all our lives" earlier on and tonight's set proves exactly why. The band – complete with a three-strong brass section – jam against a sparse backdrop daubed with the initials 'NGHFB', while TV screens overlay close-ups of Noel with neon signs screaming 'LIVE!', evoking some kind of Las Vegas residency.

Noel's on top form, using his trademark deadpan wit to gravely manage audience expectations ahead of 'Riverman': "This next song is gonna have saxophone players... *playing saxophone*. Don't be alarmed". Of course, no-one minds: fans later link arms to dance to the oompah stomp of 'The Death Of You And Me' and a bloke in a Beady Eye T-shirt fist-pumps to 'Lock All The Doors'.

If the singalong to 'AKA... What a Life!' seems overwhelming, it's nothing compared to the Oasis songs. As well as 'Champagne Supernova', Noel indulges fans in 'The Masterplan', 'Whatever' and a muscular version of 'Digsy's Dinner'. When he triumphantly bows out with 'Don't Look Back In Anger', there are no pints in the air, just arms around mates new and old. ■ JORDAN BASSETT

8

MORE GIGS

The Jesus And Mary Chain
Roundhouse, London
Sunday, July 5

Before the Mary Chain commence with the real party tonight – celebrating the 30th anniversary of 'Psychocandy' – they run through 45 minutes of songs from elsewhere in their catalogue. Things don't really get going until penultimate track 'Reverence' which is amped up to beastly levels. 'Psychocandy' commences with 'Just Like Honey', frontman Jim Reid a prowling silhouette against the album artwork that changes to splashes of psychedelic colour and home videos. By the time 'It's So Hard' brings things to a barbed, noisy close, its clear 'Psychocandy' is just as vital, powerful and intense as it was in 1985. ■ RHIAN DALY

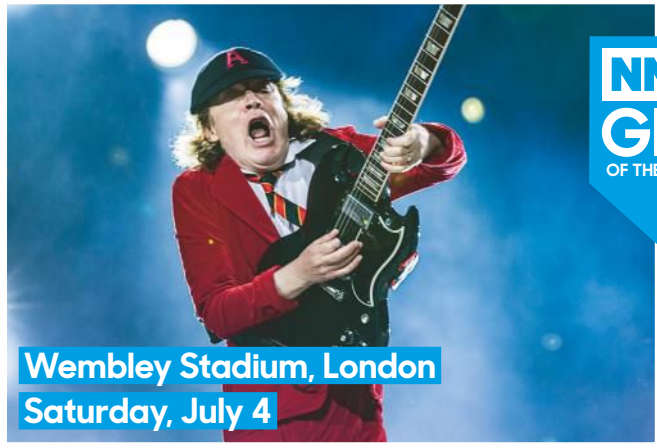
8

Alden Penner & Michael Cera
Komedia, Brighton
Monday, June 29

Having collaborated on Alden Penner's recent 'Canada In Space' EP, *Superbad* actor Michael Cera has joined the Quebec singer for this low-key UK tour. Tucked into the Komedia's tiny Studio Bar, monkish guitarist Penner – best known for his work with cult indie-poppers The Unicorns – concentrates on his poetic, softly sung pop while Cera, hopping between bass, guitar and keyboards, plays amiable host ("We like a nice, non-violent audience"). The pair's songs dovetail beautifully, Cera's 'Oh Nadine' of a piece with the stately patterns of Penner's 'Word'. Building to Penner's dreamlike sci-fi odyssey 'Breathe To Burn', it's a rare and precious show. ■ STUART HUGGETT

7

AC/DC



NME GIG OF THE WEEK

Wembley Stadium, London
Saturday, July 4

Duckwalking across the stage and cranking out monolithic riffs, Angus Young leads a rock masterclass

Exactly a week after Kanye West robustly asserted himself as the world's "greatest living rock star" during a highly charged Glastonbury headline set that frequently teetered on the brink of collapse, AC/DC take to the stage of the UK's biggest stadium and deliver a masterclass in glorious predictability that suggest Yeezy may have spoken too soon.

This is an ageing band that can manage to absorb the recent loss of drummer Phil Rudd (drug and legal issues) and guitarist and founding member Malcolm Young (retired after being diagnosed with dementia last year) for their current world tour and still keep taking care of business. Tonight, they offer up an unrelenting two-hour assault on the senses guaranteed to send everyone home happy.

SETLIST

- Rock Or Bust
- Shoot To Thrill
- Hell Ain't A Bad Place To Be
- Back In Black
- Play Ball
- Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap
- Thunderstruck
- High Voltage
- Rock'N'Roll Train
- Hells Bells
- Baptism By Fire
- You Shook Me All Night Long
- Sin City
- Shot Down In Flames
- Have A Drink On Me
- TNT
- Whole Lotta Rosie
- Let There Be Rock
- Highway To Hell
- For Those About To Rock (We Salute You)

The setlist follows the familiar AC/DC pattern of providing a moderate smattering of tunes from their current album, in this case 2014's 'Rock Or Bust'. The title track, which opens the set, is hailed by a suitably ostentatious blast of fireworks, and the sports soundtrack-friendly 'Play Ball' fits in seamlessly, as AC/DC have never really strayed from their breathless, bawdy, don't-bore-us blueprint in the 42 years they've been together. But these are interspersed with hardy perennials, some of which, such as a ferociously intense 'Back In Black' and an irresistibly corny 'Thunderstruck', are dusted down early on.

The thrilling rush of big hitters are greeted like trusty old pals by the hugely partisan sold-out 72,500 audience, a great percentage of whom are sporting Angus Young-style devil horns that handily glow in the dark, making for an arresting sight when the sun dips. The iconic Young is the focal point, cranking out those monolithic riffs, sweatily duckwalking across the huge stage and gradually shedding his red velvet school uniform until, during a suitably cataclysmic 'Let There Be Rock', he's completing a 10-minute solo in what is basically his pants on a raised platform in the middle of the crowd. It should be no way for a 60-year-old man to behave, but he looks like he's having the time of his life, the lynchpin of the utterly unique AC/DC – *still* the world's greatest living rock band. ■ ALAN WOODHOUSE

9

Open'er Festival

Gdynia, Poland
Wednesday, July 1 – Saturday, July 4

A triumphant Libs, a majestic Kasabian and more at the surrealist wonderland

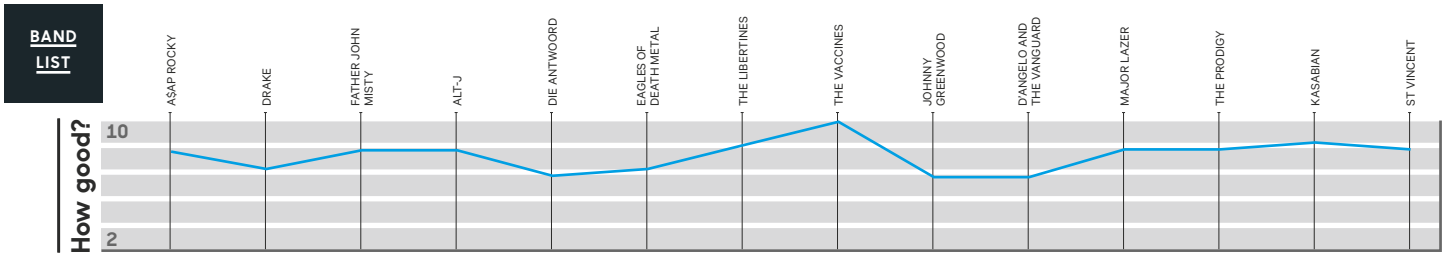
By the campsite, teams of people roll around playing zorb-ball inside inflatable spheres. Onsite, dancers that look like Tim Burton toybox marionettes jerk out stilted moves on a stage set midway between a high art museum and a towering neon phallus-like sculpture. The mascot is a cow on stilts. It's fair to say that Poland's Open'er festival – which takes place on the site of Gdynia Kosakowo Airport – is a surrealist's wonderland, even before **D'Angelo And The Vanguard** arrive, with the R&B legend dressed like a Noel Fielding character.

But the strangest sight of the four-day shindig, in this writer's eyes, is the former busker who's been Cinderella'd to stardom as **A$AP Rocky**'s very own Dido. "Ladies and gentlemen, Joe Fox!" the New York rapper bellows, introducing a singer whose most high-profile shows, until A$AP discovered him busking in Soho at 4am and snaffled him to write sumptuous hooks on his 'At.Long.Last. A$AP' album, had included regular slots at this writer's Camden clubnight. Sure enough, Joe adorns the likes of 'Holy Ghost' and 'Jukebox Joints' with a melodic soul, sophistication and authenticity, while A$AP's inventions in narcotic psych rap ('L$D', the gorgeous 'Excuse Me') make us feel trapped in the belly of a very stoned Kraken the sea monster.

Open'er loves its outsiders – its disco freaks, busking bums, cultural high-thinkers and pretend priests. On Wednesday, as **Drake** impregnates half of Poland with his 'sensitive' superhuman-sperm-count loverman rap on the main stage, **Father John Misty** (not a real clergyman, get the last rites from this guy and you'll be pitchforked in the jacksy for eternity) rains scorching space-gospel fire and brimstone onto the Alter Stage. At 1am, South African ravers **Die Antwoord** bound about in outfits resembling a Ku Klux Klan graffiti wing, sounding like Bowie's 'The Laughing Gnome' has grown up and got into gabba techno.

The "best audience of the entire tour" (copyright every act all week) have a tendency to mistake this hornet-infested airstrip for Pacha at dawn. Come Thursday, **Major Lazer** draw one of the weekend's biggest crowds to their wild-ass Ibiza foam party rammed with ticker tape cannons and dancers doing the splits to samples of 'I Like To Move It'. And **The Prodigy**'s monstrous techno assault owns Friday; Keith Flint the ultimate robo-Lydon and Maxim leading "all my Polish people!" in 'Breathe', 'Voodoo People' and the Duran Duran-on-a-Magaluf-stag 'Omen'.

Tiring of dumb dance thrills? Then embrace Open'er's cerebral side. In the Tent Stage on



ANDY HUGHES

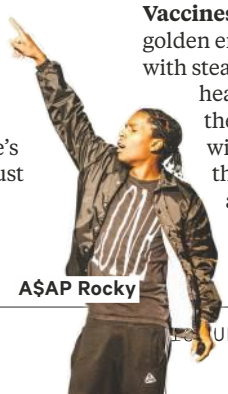
The Libertines' Pete'n'Carl get close and, below, Father John Misty joins the crowd

Kasabian

D'Angelo

Eagles Of Death Metal

The Vaccines


A$AP Rocky

BAND OF THE FESTIVAL?

Kacper Wazniak, 19, London **"I enjoyed watching Major Lazer, it was a really great atmosphere."**

Peter Rutzler, 19, London **"I'd have to say Major Lazer, they were bouncing the whole time but I'm expecting it to be eclipsed by Kasabian."**

Mikolij Naderza, 18, Malbork **"The Prodigy, their power and energy was great and their people were having great, great fun."**

Kuba Krzuwlecz, 18, from Leba **"Kasabian or Die Antwoord. They were fantastic. They are mad."**

Friday **Jonny Greenwood** recruits the London Contemporary Orchestra to perform his experimental modern classical pieces. This generally involves the Radiohead guitarist fondling a sitar or piano while the LCO try to saw their instruments in half with their bows. At its calmest, 'Application 45 Version 1' resembles Snow White in a k-hole, and its wildest moment,'88: Sketch', is essentially a woman punching a piano keyboard like she's lost it in a bitter divorce. Baffled? Just wait until **St Vincent** performs prostrate on a hospital couch, repeatedly mimes cutting her own throat and has what appear to be melodic stomach cramps during her enthralling Saturday show.

Open'er appreciates the finer arts so much that **Alt-J**'s wispy monktronica is greeted with such roars you'd think One Direction had just arrived, but it's a bumper year for rock geezers too. **Eagles Of Death Metal** spew trucker boogie sex rock for an audience of "hungry cannibals of rock'n'roll" while pretending that singer and part-time nipple Jesse Hughes has married lost-on-his-way-to-a-ZZ Top-rehearsal guitarist Dave Catching. **The Vaccines**' incredible barrage of retooled golden era rock'n'roll leaves the field pitted with steaming pop craters and Thursday headliners **The Libertines** far upstage their surprise Glastonbury appearance with a wild and righteous rampage through their wasted youth anthems and ballroom blitzes. "The Libertines are back at their best!" Pete yowls, plonking a fan's sailor hat on John Hassall after a moving 'You're My Waterloo' full of classic Doherty references to Judy Garland and Tony Hancock.

Kasabian tackle the final night with the cocksure poise of a band admiring the cut of their new headliner robes. They strike like a meteorite, scattering chunks of molten rock majesty: the Diplodocus stampede of 'Bumblebeee', the wobbly space Abba of 'Eez-Eh' and the way 'Days Are Forgotten' rides in on a black gothic-western horse. Before long Serge is dancing down the barrier walkways like a rubber-limbed disco king, they're dropping wink-wink snippets of The Doors' 'People Are Strange' and Fatboy Slim's 'Praise You' and invading **Disclosure**'s fest-closing set, the embodiment of Open'er. Innovate hard, and don't stop the dance. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

8

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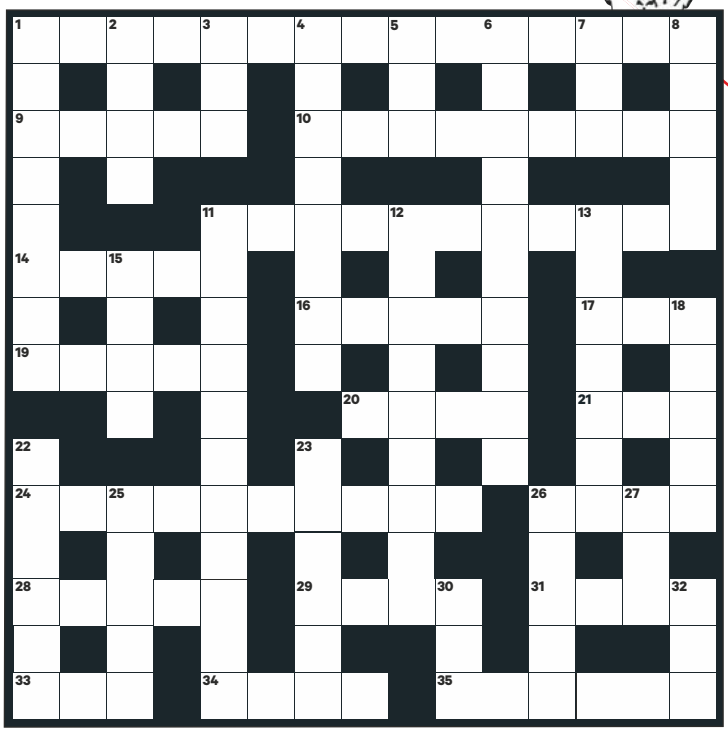

CLUES ACROSS

1 For Justin and the boys the writing's on the wall... and such common language! (7-8)
9 Kodaline are all prepared for release of a single (5)
10 I danced at wrong place to Johnny Marr number (9)
11+18D *"I can feel the earth begin to move, I hear my needle hit the groove"*, 1989 (3-5-3-5)
14 *"I can't tell between _____ and glory"*, from Babyshambles' 'Fuck Forever' (5)
16 To avoid repetition of Gossip (5)
17 Looking embarrassed to have albums by Guillemots, King Crimson and Taylor Swift (3)
19 (See 3 down)
20 Fronted by Casey Chaos, they're the last word in hardcore punk (4)
21 Early bassist for The Beatles, ___ Sutcliffe, who died in 1962 (3)
24+30D+6D No more merry-go-rounds, no more helter-skelter, White Lies are getting off (8-2-3-10)
26 'Tons Of ____', album by Free that's crying out to be completed (4)
28 Iron Butterfly's vocalist found in the middle of a singing lesson (5)
29 Post-punks The Subway ____ or blues-rockers The Downliners ____ (4)
31 *"____ I'll remember all my life /____ when you can't see wrong from right"*, The Kinks (4)
33 2015 film documentary directed by Asif Kapadia (3)
34 Leading nu-metal exponents whose albums include 'Life Is Peachy' and 'Follow The Leader' (4)
35 It's that time of year for an album by Patti Smith (6)

CLUES DOWN

1 Got paid for having done work by The Weeknd (6-2)
2+13D Organ tours I'm arranging for The Cardigans (4-7)
3+19A Privy pit sorted out by Waxahatchee (3-5)
4 Legendary music venue had a nice revamp (8)
5 Move pretty quickly to get a single from New Order's album 'Technique' (3)
6 (See 24 across)
7+27D *"I wanna play cricket on the green, ride my bike across the street"*, 1966 (2-1-3)
8 *"Goodnight _____, I'll see you in my dreams"*, Leadbelly (5)
11 *"Don't touch the sleeping pills, they mess with my head"*, 2015 (4-2-5)
12 Welshmen who were 'Not Accepted Anywhere' (9)
13 (See 2 down)
15 Throw a six somehow to get a Pet Shop Boys song (4)
18 (See 11 across)
22 *"I hear the drums echoing tonight, but she hears only whispers of some quiet conversation"*, 1983 (6)
23 A more intimate set of music from Joy Division (6)
25 dB's drummer has equipment near to hand (5)
26 'Shot By Both _____', Magazine or 'Both _____ Now', Joni Mitchell (5)
27 (See 7 down)
30 (See 24 across)
32 How to address Paul McCartney and Mick Jagger (3)

JULY 4 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1+4A Marks To Prove It, 9 Believe, 10 Nothing, 11 If I Could, 14+18A High Hopes, 16 Pele, 20 InMe, 21 Surprise, 23 Yargo, 25 Dragnet, 28 AM, 30 Hate, 31 Arms, 33 League, 35 Visitor **DOWN** 1 Mr Brightside, 2+19D Rolling Stones, 3 Step On, 5 Pins, 6+4D Out Of The Blue, 7 Evil Empire, 8 Tiger, 13+36A Gen Strange, 15 Hip, 16 Pride, 17 Lie, 18 Hey Ya, 22 Reapers, 24 Waters, 26+12A Night Of Fear, 27+24A Their Way, 29 Maria, 32 Mwng, 34 TV

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